

HISTORICAL WRITING AND COMMUNITY
AMONG THE *ORTI ORICELLARI*

by
Heather Stein

A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Baltimore, Maryland

September 14, 2015

Abstract

My research interprets the specific context in which Florentine humanist historians of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century wrote: the social, political and intellectual world that informed authors' conceptions of history and how historical texts functioned in that world. Historical writing is the crucial link between Renaissance humanism and statescraft. In response to recent calls for a more actor-centred approach to problems of the state by scholars such as Pieroangelo Schiera, I demonstrate that by the early sixteenth century, the ten Florentine humanists and governors (Bernardo Rucellai, Giovanni Corsi, Pietro Crinito, Francesco da Diacceto, Francesco Vettori, Piero Martelli, Giovanni Canacci, Bartolomeo Fontius, Cosimo Pazzi and Bindaccio Ricasoli) who met regularly in Bernardo Rucellai's eponymous gardens to discuss matters of politics and culture adopted a new philosophy of history that steered away from divine intervention in the secular world. Their historical philosophy focused instead on the human experience and emotional response to the spilling out of the violence of the battlefield into the population. My study situates the historical writing of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century in the context of the Italian Wars and the developments in political thought leading up to the landmark publication of Machiavelli's *Il principe*.

Readers: Dr. Gabrielle M. Spiegel, Dr. Christopher S. Celenza, Dr. Walter Stephens, Dr. Eugenio Refini.

Acknowledgements

All dissertations are struggles, or so I have been told, but mine has been made much easier by a group of passionate, caring scholars who have encouraged my work on this project over the course of the past seven years.

To my advisors Dr. Gabrielle M. Spiegel and Dr. Christopher S. Celenza: our conversations were riveting, your feedback was incredibly helpful and your edits have made the final draft much more readable. Your patience and guidance have helped me overcome a number of personal obstacles along the way. I have learned what Dr. Spiegel once described to me as her historical philosophy after a major setback: Bad things happen. I firmly believe that Bartolommeo della Fonte, Bernardo Rucellai, and *especially* Niccolò Machiavelli would agree.

The Hopkins History department has been a wonderful place to attend graduate school. Dr. Ronald Walters was the Director of Graduate Studies during my first year and his warm welcome to the community set the tone for almost all of the interactions that followed. The Frederick Jackson Turner Fund financed my very first conference presentation in March 2010. Our administrators, Lisa Enders and Rachel LaBozzetta, constantly found the time to help out, and always with a smile and a kind word of encouragement. Coffees shared in the Brody Learning Commons with [the now] Dr. Jonathan Gienapp resulted in more concrete plans, better writing and an increased level of confidence. My colleagues have proven to be overwhelmingly kind and generous.

The Hopkins community as a whole has been incredibly supportive and I feel blessed to have spent these past years in such an intellectually demanding environment. A complete list of colleagues and friends to whom I am indebted for feedback, suggestions and solace is overwhelming; I hope that I have expressed my heartfelt gratitude vocally and frequently over the years. Dr. Larry Principe's medieval Latin reading groups collaborated on translations of a few of my Latin sources. Dr. Matthew Roller guided me through the difficulties of Sallustian Latin. Dr. Samuel Chambers patiently tolerated my turning his seminar on Machiavelli in 20th century political thought into a seminar on Machiavelli himself, and his students patiently listened to my first awkward attempts at examining the nature of the balance of power metaphor in international relations.

Dr. Julie Reiser's dissertation writing workshop offered by the Center for Leadership Education was a useful and oftentimes fun experience in working out the details of how to actually complete an outlined project. Amy Sheeran and Shana O'Connell helped me keep SMART goals. In terms of institutional support, one figure stands out for special mention: Megan Zeller's office in Gilman Hall was an oasis in the desert where both problems and self-doubt evaporated quickly. Thank you Megan for talking me down off the ledge and always making graduate students feel important and cherished.

This wonderful opportunity was only made possible through the generous support of a series of wonderful educators throughout my education. My senior-year English

teacher, Keith Bellamy, first introduced me to the structure of grammar and literary criticism. The lessons learned in his classroom were the foundations upon which I was able to acquire other languages and analyse primary sources. The Liberal Arts College at Concordia University provided me with a strong basis in the Western canon and a literary-historical approach that has proved exceedingly useful. My love affair with Renaissance Florence began during a largely unchaperoned trip to Tuscany and Venice in May 2005 organised by Drs. Frederick and Lenore Krantz. It remains one of the happiest times of my life. Drs. Ariela Freedman, Tobias Gittes and Shannon McSheffrey all warned me of the perils of academia and encouraged me when I chose to accept the challenge. Baruch Cohen at the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research taught me how the atrocities of the past can be well-nigh impossible to discuss and that friendship knows no age brackets.

I am especially grateful to Lina d'Iorio for her intervention on my behalf in April 2005 when I missed a final exam during my sophomore year. Had she not called my home that morning and advocated for me with the Liberal Arts College faculty, in all likelihood I would not have made it to Johns Hopkins.

In Toronto, Dr. Nicolas Terpstra at the University of Toronto did not shy away from guiding me in a project that was outside the scope of his own work and helped find the resources necessary to complete such a project. Dr. Isabelle and Emily Cochelin were a second home in Toronto; they ensured that I ate properly and provided a model for an academic career with a healthy work-life balance. I am grateful to the Centre for Medieval Studies for its demanding, difficult and entirely worthwhile focus on the ability to sight-read medieval Latin. The skills acquired during those summers spent at CMS are the cornerstones upon which this dissertation is laid. Dr. Jonathan Cayer and Dr. Morris Tichenor each made wrestling with complicated grammatical constructions fun.

I also need to acknowledge the very generous support of a number of institutions external to the Hopkins Department of History over the past seven years. The Charles Singleton Center for the Study of Pre-Modern Europe financed my last archival trip to Italy from November to December 2014. A B1 grant from the *Fonds de Recherche du Québec – Société et Culture* has supported my studies since July 2012. The Dean's Office at Johns Hopkins awarded me a Dean's Teaching Fellowship over Spring 2015 that permitted me to integrate the content of this dissertation into a freshman seminar that challenged both me and (I hope!) my students.

While in Hawaii in September 2014 I learned the native word for 'extended family': *ohana*. *Ohana* is more than just blood relations; it includes adopted and intentional relatives. This project would never have been possible without the constant, loving sustenance of my *ohana*, located both in Baltimore and scattered around the world, some of whom have already been named above, who not only listened to my writing woes, but also helped me through the long recovery from a life-threatening condition. My bedside, both literal and metaphoric, was rarely vacant and your faces were a beacon of light during that difficult time.

Specifically, I would like to thank in no particular order: Meredith Raucher, who filled our shared work- and yoga-space with acceptance, support, and shared horror

stories. Her sage advice in matters both of the heart and of the dissertation was often difficult to swallow, but always thoughtful and sincere. Her companionship at three international medieval conferences in Kalamazoo made days of relentlessly practicing ‘networking’ bearable. Had I not agreed to go to Kalamazoo with Meredith, I would not have met Dr. Stephen Mark Carey, who listened to all of my job market woes and crises of confidence, and like a wise mentor provided a clear, honest picture of the tenure process and life of an academic. If I ever have to hire a personal cheerleader – it will be Steve. Andrew Levitt’s generous devotion to my emotional well-being both during those first weeks in Florence in 2014 and afterwards upon his return to the United States merits explicit acknowledgement. Matthew Peters reminded me regularly of the world outside Johns Hopkins and academia. We explored not only Baltimore’s culinary scene but also the wonderful cities of this great country that I have proudly called home for the last seven years. Troy Tower, my roommate and best friend, remains a sounding board for my nascent, half-formed ideas, and was a constant companion during this epic journey. His timely intervention on March 30, 2012 literally saved my life and blessed me with so many more years with which to not only write a dissertation but to also accomplish even greater things in the future. There are not enough words to thank you.

When I arrived at Johns Hopkins there were no other medievalists among the history department’s graduate students and my first weeks in the program were lonesome (despite the visits of two *ohana*, Isabelle Richer and Arie Sochaczewski). I am glad to say that is no longer the case. My academic siblings, Nathan Daniels, Neil Weijer, Brendan Goldman and Jennie Grayson have brainstormed and helped with drafts – often on short notice, and with clear, constructive criticism. The community we have forged together, I would like to think, resembles the *Orti Oricellari* to a certain extent in its collaborative nature, varied interests, and frequent meetings in my back garden. Some of my greatest insights have arrived while standing on the porch smoking a cigarette with my fellow medievalists whose works share neither a common time period or geographic region. Perhaps one day in the distant future, a graduate student will analyse the acknowledgments in our dissertations in an attempt to reconstruct an early 21st century sodality. Wouldn’t that be grand? Will they mention the smoking and the barking? And lest I forget, a mention must be made of the other wonderful members of this community: Macaroni, Gouda, Tali and Tucker all deserve mention for their light-hearted contributions to what were frequently sombre discussions.

Without the hours upon hours of transcribed conversations with Jean-Olivier Richard, this dissertation would still be in shambles. Were it not for the numerous hours spent lying on his couch with the magic soporific camel, I would not have been able to navigate the stormy waters of life. Penultimately, Veronica O’Neill née Stockwell, my intentional sister, is owed my eternal thanks for the place she has made for me both in her heart and in her home. Her unwillingness to tolerate my whining, excuses and failures was often the spark I needed to get back on track. I am surrounded by loving, caring people who hold my hand, and I am thankful that you are also there to push me when need be.

Lastly, my parents, Martin and Roberta Stein, and my godmother, Lorraine Weeks, who always believed in me no matter how sure I was that things were not going to work out – I guess you were right. I did finish it after all!

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Historical Background.....	12
Chapter 2: The People and Space of the <i>Orti Oricellari</i>	43
Chapter 3: Historical Writing on the Eve of the Italian Wars.....	75
Chapter 4: Bernardo Rucellai, humanist and diplomat.....	103
Chapter 5: Bernardo Rucellai's <i>De bello italico</i>	132
Conclusion.....	172
Bibliography.....	185
Curriculum Vitae.....	203

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Palazzo Rucellai.....	44
Figure 2: Basilica Santa Maria Novella.....	44
Figure 3: Rucellai in Florence.....	45
Table 1: Membership of the Rucellai Group in the Early Phase.....	50-1
Table 2: Membership of the Rucellai Group in the Later Phase.....	51-2

Introduction

The concept of a “balance of power” between nations is widely employed in international relations, political theory and twentieth century media coverage as a means of describing the relationships between governments and peoples. It is used today in international relations in order to represent a mathematical-mechanical relationship that results in a zero-sum game wherein a state of static equilibrium is possible, generally without consideration of the fact that it has a long history, with roots in different political realities than ours. Long before famous Enlightenment political theorists like Charles Irénée Castel de Saint-Pierre and Charles-Louis le Secondat, Baron of Montesquieu, writing in the context of emerging modern nation states, gave the metaphor of balance the theoretical veneer that modern readers are familiar with; and long before the Peace of Westphalia prompted this theorization with the creation of national borders in Western Europe, already in the sixteenth century Italian thinkers employed a similar language to describe political relationships at the level of large social groups.¹

The Florentine historian Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540) is the most famous early exponent of this theory. In the context of a discussion of Italian peninsular politics that opens his *magnum opus*, *Storia d'Italia*, Guicciardini says that the wise politician strives with great effort to maintain affairs as if in a balance, so that no power inclines more to one side than to another. He describes this state of equilibrium between the

¹ The Abbé de Saint-Pierre indeed, prefaces his *Treaty on Perpetual Peace* with the claim to be examining the methods by which politicians maintain and establish an “equilibrium of power.” Abbé de Saint-Pierre, *Projet pour rendre la paix perpétuelle en Europe* (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 11; See Alfred Vagts, “The Balance of Power: Growth of an Idea,” *World Politics* 1 (1948), 82-101.

interests of distinct groups as one of a precarious peace and prosperity.² An earlier, lesser-known example is Bernardo Rucellai (1448-1514) whose work and career constitute the core topics of this dissertation. Rucellai was a politician and man-of-letters who like Guicciardini had first-hand experience of troublesome times and tumultuous politics at the turn of the sixteenth century. Each undertook to write an historical account of his era and achieved a sophisticated understanding of the complex nature of politics, even as he struggled with a conception of the Italian peninsula as a geographic and political entity. The emergence of the ‘balance of power’ in their narratives was indeed prompted by the need to describe a changing political landscape involving a number of neighboring city-states at war with a foreign enemy.

This dissertation argues for the importance of studying the larger social networks that brought about the innovations in political thought for which Renaissance Italy is remembered. The balance of power metaphor employed by sixteenth century thinkers is but one, small example of the ways in which sixteenth-century thinkers set out to document and explain the political turmoil of the Italian Wars of 1494-1559 in their historical writings. Indeed, the experience of these wars transformed historical writing, broadening its horizons beyond the city-state and away from moral philosophy. Through this new perspective on history, there arose a growing understanding of social groups as national collectives. This understanding in turn became a precondition for the transformation of the balance of power metaphor, gradually shifting its meaning from an exercise in balancing the interests of distinct bodies within a shared geographic space

² Francesco Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. Silvana Seidel Menchi, I (Turin: Einaudi, 1971), I, 1, 6-7: “[Lui] procurava con ogni studio che le cose d’Italia in modo bilanciate si mantenessino che più in una che in un’altra parte non pendessino: il che, senza la conservazione della pace e senza vegghiare con somma diligenza ogni accidente benché minimo, succedere non poteva.”

towards the modern, mathematical usage with its militaristic connotations in the context of international relations.

In the same way that the Thirty Years' War, the Eighty Years' War and the Peace of Westphalia were intimately embroiled in the development of national sentiment and the theories making sense of this development, so did the traumatic events in sixteenth century Italy serve as a catalyst for new understandings of politics and community. The Italian Wars and the reigning political culture that they disrupted were instrumental in bringing about the development and use of not only the balance of power metaphor, but also new conceptions of liberty and civic virtue. This dissertation examines the implications of this fact.

The importance of Florentine political thought for the development of the Western political tradition has been a main concern in the work of J.G.A. Pocock, whose *Machiavellian Moment* traces the appropriation and adaptation of a Florentine political vocabulary centred around republicanism by Atlantic theorists. For Pocock, the heavy emphasis on virtue in commerce, trade and political stability is such that “the first chapter in this history of political economy is a further chapter in the continuing history of civic humanism.”³ Quentin Skinner, likewise, argues for the centrality of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) and his political context in *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*.⁴ For these scholars of intellectual history, the instability and chaos of Italy in the sixteenth century necessitated the development of new ways of thinking about politics and political relationships, and this discourse lives on to our own times.

³ J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975), 426.

⁴ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), esp. vol. I, 69-189.

A recent monograph by Richard Little has argued that given the constitutive nature of language and metaphor, we would do well to examine the hidden valences of those metaphors we use to describe social reality.⁵ He examines the central role that the balance of power metaphor has played in the development of theoretical international relations. Although Little traces the origins of the metaphor back to the sixteenth-century in the figure of Guicciardini and the unstable political context of the Italian Wars, he does not accompany his analysis with an examination of the assumed metaphorical body, Italy, that is in a state of balance. This dissertation brings together the constitutive metaphor and the community that is being constituted in the writings in which that metaphor is employed.

A recent, insightful study of the political culture of late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century Florence by Nicholas Scott Baker challenges some of the claims of Skinner and Pocock who emphasise the radical nature of these “new” concepts, this “new” discourse. Using both written and visual evidence, Baker argues that the continuity of language, concepts and actual political figures central to the republican tradition within Florentine political culture throughout and beyond the change of regime from a republic to a principate demonstrates “that cultural roots of the authoritarian state lie in the same soil that produced the liberal, participatory system.”⁶ His work demonstrates how concepts and ideas can evolve into different systems, just as the balance of power metaphor would evolve from an organic into a mathematical-mechanical representation of relationships between social groups. This process is generally one of

⁵ Richard Little, *The Balance of Power in International Relations: Metaphors, Myths and Models* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁶ Nicholas Scott Baker, *The Fruit of Liberty: Political Culture in the Florentine Renaissance, 1480-1550* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2013), 3.

reconceptualization rather than actual novelty. Studying the elements of continuity in Florentine political culture from the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries help us better appreciate the elements of novelty in Machiavelli.

I will approach these questions through the writings produced by the circle around Bernardo Rucellai, Florentine political actor, diplomat and historian and the circle of Florentine intellectuals that gathered around him. Rucellai, disgusted with the changes to the Florentine constitution that he himself helped bring about in 1502, retired from active political life. He did not, however, abandon his intellectual and cultural pursuits. His garden, the *Orti Oricellari*, became a meeting place for the Florentine social and intellectual elite. Nine men, in addition to Rucellai himself, were frequent participants at these gatherings: Giovanni Corsi, Pietro Crinito, Francesco da Diacceto, Francesco Vettori, Piero Martelli, Giovanni Canacci, Bartolomeo della Fonte, Cosimo Pazzi and Bindaccio Ricasoli. Politicians, ambassadors, ecclesiastical officials and public intellectuals, these men had privileged vantage points from which to witness current events and to discuss their repercussions for Italian identity and political sovereignty. I offer a close reading of the historical texts that emerged from this circle that elucidates how their active engagement in both the events and the discourse about how the events should be interpreted came to inflect understandings of Italian identity in this period.

My research builds upon two bodies of scholarship. One, pioneered by Wallace K. Ferguson's 1948 monograph *The Renaissance in Historical Thought*, and perhaps best represented by the works of Denys Hay and Donald R. Kelley, concerns itself with the professionalisation of the historical craft. While Ferguson's analysis of the various metaphors of cultural revival employed by humanists to describe the ideology of the

fourteenth to sixteenth centuries has the merit of having first pointed out the centrality of historical writing to the humanist cultural project, Hay has sharpened our understanding of the development of historical scholarship with a jargon-free analysis of how the discoveries of anachronism and the development of literary historical texts came together with new research skills and chronological arrangement in the eighteenth century to establish the foundations of the modern historical craft.⁷ Kelley has mapped out the close and dynamic relationship between legal scholars and those concerned with historical writings.⁸ These scholars and other authors who have walked in their footsteps provide fine-grained analyses of individual Renaissance historians such as Florentine chancellors Bartolommeo della Scala, Poggio Bracciolini, and Leonardo Bruni, as well as papal bureaucrat Flavio Biondo.⁹ These contributions have made it possible to analyse the processes whereby doing history came to mean a different thing than it did in the Middle Ages.¹⁰ Whereas much scholarship has examined the historical works produced by this

⁷ Denys Hay, *Annalists and Historians: Western Historiography from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1977).

⁸ Donald R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law and History in the French Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); Donald R. Kelley, *Renaissance Humanism* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991).

⁹ Donald J. Wilcox, *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1969); Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981); Denys Hay, "Flavio Biondo and the Middle Ages," *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1959), 97-125; Nicoletta Pellegrino, "From the Roman Empire to Christian Imperialism: The Work of Flavio Biondo," in *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. Sharon Dale, et. al. (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State Press, 2007): 273-298; Riccardo Fubini, "The Theater of the World in the Moral and Historical Thought of Poggio Bracciolini," in *Humanism and Secularization*, tr. Martha King (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 89-139; Gary Ianziti, "Humanism's New Science: The History of the Future," *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance* 4 (1991), 59-88; and most recently Gary Ianziti, *History in Renaissance Italy: Leonardo Bruni and the Uses of the Past* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2012).

¹⁰ Louis Green, *Chronicle into History: An Essay on the Interpretation of History in Florentine Fourteenth-Century Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 7. Louis Green has described this shift as "a shift of standpoint from, as it were, immersion in history to contemplation of it [with a] consequent creation both of a sense of historical depth and of a view of history as, at least potentially, a comparative study." The distance perceived between the ancient past and the present changed the way that historical processes were understood in the present.

bureaucratic class, less attention has been devoted to the historical thought of the patricians who governed their cities, patricians like Bernardo Rucellai. For one cannot divorce the development of the historical craft from the concrete political needs and aims of their writers. Historical texts are one of the ways in which history is shared. By means of stylistic, syntactic and structural choices, an historical writer narrates events in a manner that establishes a community as subject and, frequently, the reader as a member of that community. Thus, no history is completely divorced from ideology.

A second, complementary body of works has examined how historical writing is intimately embroiled in politics. Chief among the scholars who have contributed to this historiography are Felix Gilbert and Mark Phillips, whose works on Machiavelli and Guicciardini place these great thinkers in the complicated, dynamic social and intellectual context that fostered the development of their unique historical perspectives.¹¹ Phillips specifically investigates Guicciardini's use of medical metaphors to explain the difficulties faced by the Italian city-states.¹² Gary Ianziti has analysed Sforza-sponsored historiography in the fifteenth century and its legitimization of Francesco's Sforza's take-over of Milan. The abundant scholarship on Florentine political culture produced by the likes of Nicolai Rubinstein, Humphrey C. Butters, Roslyn Pesman Cooper, Dale V. Kent, Francis Kent and Alison Brown provide the backdrop against which to analyse the specific texts.¹³

¹¹Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth Century Florence* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1965); Mark Phillips, *Francesco Guicciardini: The Historian's Craft* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

¹² Phillips, *Francesco Guicciardini*, 146.

¹³ For an overview of recent scholarship on Florentine political culture, see Riccardo Fubini, "Renaissance Humanism and its Development in Florentine Civic Culture," *Palgrave Advances in Renaissance Historiography*, ed. Jonathan Woolfson (Hampshire & New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005): 118-139;

Analysing humanist historical practice has been a fruitful approach to understanding humanism as a whole and its connection to politics, yet most of the previous scholarship focusses on a “canon” of works consisting of the Villani brothers, Leonardo Bruni, Bartolommeo Scala, Poggio Bracciolini, Guicciardini and, of course, Machiavelli, rather than on the lesser-known and more conservative figures, whose works were perhaps more representative of the historical craft of the period. Such are the members of the Orti group that I propose to study.

Methodologically speaking, I am especially indebted to Gary Ianziti’s work for its approach to the analysis of the political aims of Renaissance historical projects. Throughout his prolific career, Ianziti has analysed both contemporary histories and re-writings of the ancient past produced by Renaissance writers. This dissertation adopts Ianziti’s approach to historical texts in order to tease out the nature of the social group whose history is being recounted, the political aims of the author and the metaphor that comes to be adopted to represent that community. To this end, I offer an in-depth explication of genre, style and narrative content. My overarching goal is two-fold. First, I want to demonstrate the benefits gained by contextualising historical-literary texts and debates in local political and social networks in order to account for their particular forms.

See for example, Felix Gilbert, “Florentine Political Assumptions in the Period of Savonarola and Soderini,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20 (1957): 187-214; Nicolai Rubinstein, *The government of Florence under the Medici (1434-1494)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Nicolai Rubinstein, “The Place of Empire in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Political Opinion and Diplomacy,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 30 (1957): 125-135; H.C. Butters, *Governors and Government in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence 1502-1519* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Roslyn Pesman Cooper, *Pier Soderini and the Ruling Class in Renaissance Florence* (Goldbach: Keip Verlag, 2002); Dale V. Kent, *Friendship, Love and Trust in Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, MA. and London: Harvard University P, 2009); Francis William Kent, *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence: The Family Life of the Capponi, Ginori and Rucellai* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1977); Alison Brown, “The Revolution of 1494 in Florence and its Aftermath: A Reassessment,” in *Italy in Crisis, 1494*, ed. J. Everson and D. Zancani (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2000), 13-4; Alison Brown, “City and Citizen: Changing Perceptions in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” in *City states in classical antiquity and medieval Italy*, ed. Anthony Molho, et. al. (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1991): 93-111.

Second, I offer an explanation as to how these texts both contributed to and were shaped by changing conceptions of Italian community. In this way, I uncover what Gabrielle M. Spiegel has described as “the social logic of the text.”¹⁴

Chapter One provides an overview of the Italian Wars. It describes the main actors in the historical events, primarily kings and princes, but diplomats and military commanders as well, and follows the narrative of the French campaign to Naples from 1494-1495 and their subsequent retreat. It is a background chapter. It argues that the experience of the French campaign was so traumatic and politically disruptive for Italians that it required a re-evaluation of the traditional, medieval mode of historical narrative.

Chapter Two turns to a prosopographic overview of the members of an unofficial academy in Florence, called the Orti Oricellari, who convened regularly in Bernardo Rucellai’s gardens to exchange news, share projects and participate in lively intellectual debate. This group is the immediate social setting in which historians like Rucellai formulated a new philosophy of history and vision of the relationships between political and social groups. This environment of mutual collaboration and support with concern for individual’s specific goals perhaps serves as a microcosm for a wider-scale conception of Italy as a cooperative union between individual members for the promotion of a peaceful and productive environment.

The remaining chapters analyse specific historical texts by Bartolommeo della Fonte (1446-1513) and Bernardo Rucellai, members of the Orti group. Chapter Three is

¹⁴Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text,” in *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1999), 3-28.

devoted to Bartolommeo della Fonte and serves as a counterpoint to establish my argument about Rucellai. Writing before the Italian Wars, della Fonte's *Annales* and *Orations* (the former a chronological account of 1448-1484; the latter a pair of philosophical speeches on historical writing) suggest that the concept of balance of power had not yet taken hold although his writing suggests a broadening of the geographical scope of historical analysis and the secular nature of its explanations was already in progress. That the Italian Wars served as a catalyst to further the development of these trends of concern with foreign powers and secular explanations for historical events is evidenced in my fourth and fifth chapters on Bernardo Rucellai. Chapter Four recounts Rucellai's life and introduces his work at length in order to demonstrate how his distinguished diplomatic and political career informed his philosophy of history and his understanding of political behaviour as being primarily influenced by the forces of factionalism between the different political elements in a community. In other words, at the level of inter-state relations, we find the beginning of an awareness of "national" sentiment. Rucellai demonstrates through his style and complexity the failure of the traditional, medieval model of historical explanation and at the same time, in his discussion of governance and governed communities, he proposes a tentative solution both to the problems faced by historians of the Italian Wars and the problems faced more broadly by the Italian city-states as self-governing communities.

The comparison between Della Fonte and Rucellai reveals changes in the historical craft that were integral to the rise of an empirically-minded approach to the study of society. These changes included the turning away from supernatural explanations for temporal events and a newfound concern with the lived-experience of all

members of the community (i.e. a concern for the plight of the poor in warfare). Were we to examine historical works written by other members of the Orti group, such as Francesco Vettori (1474-1539), and contemporary associates, such as Machiavelli, a richer picture of this shift would emerge, notably highlighting a growing concern with finances and materiality. Thus, I envision this dissertation as part of a larger project on Renaissance historical writing that would examine the role of history in the rise of political economy. For the time being, I have deliberately set asides works written in the Italian vernacular as well as chronological outliers, such as Vettori's *Sommario*, composed in Tuscan vernacular decades after the meetings Rucellai held in his garden. In the conclusion, I will, however, gesture toward some implications of my analysis for the interpretation of these works.

Chapter One: Historical Background

In 1494, there were five sovereign regional powers in Italy: Milan, Venice, Florence, the Papal States and Naples. In 1536, only one remained: Venice. These decades of conflict precipitated great anxiety among Western thinkers. Italians responded to the fragmentation, forevermore, of Latin Christendom, the end of self-governance for Italians and the beginning of the early modern era in a myriad of ways but were always heavily influenced by the lived experience of warfare between large Christian armies on the peninsula. The diplomatic and military history of this thirty-year period is a complex one that one eminent Renaissance historian, Lauro Martines, has described as "best told by a computer, so many and tangled are the treatises, negotiations and battles."¹⁵ This chapter focuses on Charles VIII's Italian campaigns from 1494 up until his death in 1498. These years of conflict on Italian soil are the subject matter of Bernardo Rucellai's early sixteenth-century eye-witness account, *De bello italico*. First, we will examine the political situations both in Italy and in France on the eve of the French advance. Then we will turn to the chronology of events, treatises, battles and political conflicts during Charles VIII's campaign. The disruptive, violent nature of the Italian Wars after years of relative peace is the backdrop against which our analysis of historical writing among the Orti Oricellari members rests.

¹⁵Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1979), 277. The best overviews of the Italian Wars in English are Gene Brucker's 'A Horseshoe Nail: Structure and Contingency in Medieval and Renaissance Italy,' in *Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2005): 62-82 and Michael Mallet and Christine Shaw, *The Italian Wars, 1494-1559* (Harlow: Pearson, 2012). See also Jean-Louis Fournel and Jean-Claude Zancarini, *Les guerres d'Italie: Des batailles pour l'Europe (1494-1559)* (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), and Marco Pellegrini, *Le guerre d'Italia (1494-1530)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009). The authoritative military history of the period is Piero Pieri, *Il Rinascimento e la crisi militare italiana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1952). The canonical source from the period itself is, of course, Francesco Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), Book 1.

In late October 1494, Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici left Florence to meet with Charles VIII of France at Sarzana, a small town just outside Florence. He did not consult with the *Otto di Pratica*, the committee in charge of foreign policy, or the *Signoria*, the main legislative assembly, regarding his mandate before leaving. Piero was the inheritor of a decades-long legacy of Medici control over Florentine foreign policy that had begun with his great-grandfather, Cosimo de' Medici.¹⁶ His clandestine diplomatic mission was in all likelihood a conscious imitation of a diplomatic victory executed by his father, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, better known as “the Magnificent,” in 1479 during a conflict with King Ferdinand of Naples.¹⁷ Piero, however, was not his father nor were the circumstances similar. Whereas Lorenzo had been welcomed at Ferdinand of Naples' court and treated as an equal in order to defuse a tense situation in the wake of the Pazzi conspiracy and assassination of Giuliano di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, Piero arrived at Sarzana to meet with the Valois king of France who was at the head of a large and seasoned army eyeing Florentine wealth and contemplating invasion.

Lorenzo de' Medici's shoes were big ones to fill. *Il Magnifico*, by all accounts, was a genuinely charismatic figure who actively sought to maintain the political *status quo* on the Italian peninsula. His endeavours to this end were widely recognized, even during his lifetime, as integral to peace in Italy. A Modenese diplomat had called him, in the style of grand flattery, *bilancia di senno*, the balance of sense and wisdom.¹⁸ The term “balance of power” itself entered the political vocabulary of Western thought as a description of the tenuous peace of the late-fifteenth century between the five regional

¹⁶ Nicolai Rubinstein, *Government of Florence under the Medici*, 267.

¹⁷ John M. Najemy, *A History of Florence, 1200-1575* (West Sussex: Blackwell, 2008), 352-361.

¹⁸ Gino Capponi, *Storia della repubblica di Firenze* (Florence: G. Barbèra, 1876) 2:428-9.

states: Milan, Florence, Venice, the Papacy and Naples – an endeavour in which the Medici family was central.¹⁹

Although it would be described as a 'golden age' by thinkers like Guicciardini and Machiavelli who wrote in the wake of the political and military catastrophes of the 1520s and 1530s, the last decades of the Quattrocento were not without conflict.²⁰ There were, in fact, three major military and diplomatic crises over the course of fifteen years that demonstrate that each state sought not to ensure collective security, but to maintain a *status quo* that was to their benefit. The Pazzi War (1478-1480) began in the wake of an assassination attempt on the Medici family sponsored by Sixtus IV, who sought to incite a change in the Florentine government that would benefit his expansionist aims in the Romagna.²¹ Full-scale violence was averted only by Lorenzo de' Medici's audacious voyage to Naples in 1479 when he handed himself over as hostage to Ferdinand I (Ferrante) of Naples who eventually broke his allegiance to the Papacy.²² The Turkish

¹⁹Vagt, "The Balance of Power," 95. The Treaty of Lodi has long been understood by scholars as the beginning of modern diplomacy. See Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955) and Donald E. Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967). A more recent collection of essays has largely challenged this interpretation on a number of grounds including that it is overly focused on monarchical diplomacy, see Daniel Frigo (ed.), *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy, the Structure of Diplomatic Practice (1450-1800)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²⁰ For an overview of the political situation in Italy preceding the Italian Wars, see David Abulafia, introduction to *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy 1494-5: Antecedent and Effects* (Aldershot and Vermont: Variorum, 1995): 1-29.

²¹ Lorenzo and his brother, Giuliano, were ambushed on Sunday 26 April 1478 in Santa Maria de' Fiore at the behest of Sixtus IV and the eponymous Pazzi family. Lorenzo was wounded. Giuliano was killed. See Lauro Martines, *April Blood: Florence and the Plot against the Medici* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. 187-196.

²² Legally, the kingdom of Naples was a papal fief and the popes asserted the right to confirm the ruler. Except for the conspicuous example of Clement VII's invitation to the Angevins (see below), it was not the Popes, but the rights of heredity and military prowess that determined who ruled in Naples. Good relations with the papacy, however, were essential to any claimant for two main reasons: (1) The entire northern border of the kingdom is shared with the Papal States; (2) Many of the local barons held lands in both the Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples. Both the papacy and the Neapolitan kings fermented baronial discontent to further their ends. See Christine Shaw, "The Papacy and the European Powers," in *Italy and the European Powers: The Impact of War, 1500-1530* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 108-9.

capture of Otranto (1480), while inspiring much verbal outrage and many calls to arms, did not result in a collective effort on the part of any Christian powers to remove the Turks from their Apulian foothold.²³ The Ottomans withdrew from southern Italy during a succession crisis following the death of Sultan Mohammed II. Lastly, the Neapolitan Barons' Revolt (1485) incited by Pope Innocent VIII, ended with the summary execution of the barons despite a promise of amnesty from Ferdinand. Armed conflict at an international level simmered continuously even if it never reached a rolling boil.

The precariousness of the peninsular balance of power was further exacerbated by internal discord within the governing group of individual regional powers. As Burckhardt aptly pointed out, the Italian powers were not legitimated by theories of sacral monarchy, and talent played a more important role than birth in determining who would control a city-state's government.²⁴ We find a good example of the abrogation of the laws of inheritance in Milan where Ludovico Sforza ruled *in lieu* of his nephew, Duke Giangaleazzo Sforza II (1476-1494). His search for a veneer of legitimacy inspired him to pay the enormous sum of 440,000 ducats to Maximilian Hapsburg, the Holy Roman Emperor, as dowry for his niece, Bianca Maria Sforza.²⁵ The marriage took place on 16 March 1494;²⁶ The ducal title was conferred on Ludovico Sforza by imperial decree on 5

²³ Margaret Meserve offers a compelling analysis of one intellectual response to the Turkish threat: a rewriting of their origin myths in Western historical texts. See *Empire of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2008).

²⁴ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (London: Allen and Unwin, 1921), 16-21.

²⁵ On strategies of legitimation in Sforzan Milan, see D. M. Bueno de Mesquita, "The Sforza Prince and his State," in *Florence and Italy: Renaissance Studies in Honour of Nicolai Rubinstein*, ed. Peter Denley and Caroline Elam (London: Westfield College, 1988), 161-172; D. M. Bueno de Mesquita, "Ludovico Sforza and his Vassals," *Italian Renaissance Studies* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960): 184-216.

²⁶ Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 71.

September 1494.²⁷ Although the Florentine government had not undergone an upheaval upon the death of Lorenzo de' Medici and transitioned to the rule of his son, Piero, the acquiescence of the patrician class to rule by an unexperienced (and apparently arrogant) young man was uncertain and untested. The very institution of Papal government, with its short reigns and elective selection process, made Papal control over its lands tenuous at best and the families of the great barons, like the Orsini and Colonna, held real power in these areas.²⁸ The Venetian Republic was the only regional power not chronically weakened by factionalism and discord and Venetian foreign policy consisted largely of upsetting the balance of power whenever it would be to her benefit.²⁹ These political challenges to unity were combined with a strong sense of regional loyalties. Historical disunity and conflict and urban polities rife with faction were strong centrifugal forces that undermined any unifying sense of *Italianità*. This, however, is not to say that the inhabitants of the peninsula did not conceive of themselves as a distinct group that shared in common a Roman past, the Latin language, the Catholic church, the Italian vernaculars and an urban environment. Rather, the forces of "division and fragmentation," as described by Gene Brucker, created a political landscape that was fragile and vulnerable to external threats as each major power privileged its own concerns over peninsular peace, the *quietà d'Italia*.³⁰

²⁷ Cecilia M. Ady, *A History of Milan under the Sforza* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 148-9.

²⁸ Christine Shaw, "The Roman barons and the French descent into Italy," in *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy*, ed. David Abulafia (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995): 249-261.

²⁹ Frederick C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), especially 87-91; *Ibid.*, 235; Nicolai Rubinstein, "Italian Reactions to Terraferma Expansion in the Fifteenth Century," *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Giovanni Ciapelli II (Rome: Edizioni di storia e della letteratura, 2004): 261-285.

³⁰ Gene Brucker, "From *Campanilismo* to Nationhood," *Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence*, 44. Vincent Illardi argues that the diplomatic correspondence of the late fifteenth-century demonstrates how foreign affairs played a substantial role in Italian political decision-making in "Towards the Tragedia

The French force led by Charles VIII encamped at Sarzana was composed of roughly 20,000 cavalry and 15,000 infantrymen. There were also over 40 cannons, each pulled by a team of four horses, capable of launching metal rather than stone projectiles at fortress walls. The effectiveness of this artillery had been firmly established at the battles of Mordano (19 October) and Fivizzano (26 October). French military technology was not the only revolutionary aspect of this conflict; their tactics were also radically different from anything previously seen on Italian soil. The French column was a cosmopolitan force that, along with a strong Italian component, included as well eight thousand Swiss whose square-formation of pikemen had proved a surprisingly quick-footed counter to cavalry for Louis XI against Charles the Bold of Burgundy.³¹ Furthermore, the French troops actively targeted the civilian population. At Fivizzano they took no prisoners and put men, women and children, layman and clergyman alike, to death. Charles VIII, unlike Ferdinand of Aragon some twenty-five years earlier, was not interested in maintaining the status quo. In fact, he sought to change radically the political landscape of Italy by making good a claim, inherited as part of his Angevin patrimony, to the throne of the kingdom of Naples. He did not intend to do so at a negotiating table, but rather with men and might. Surrender did not prevent a slaughter.

Although posterity has not been kind to Piero de' Medici, his response to the size of the French force and their determination to extract money and safe passage from the Florentines, is not surprising. Within less than a week, on 1 November 1494, he acquiesced to all of Charles VIII's demands. The French campaign in Italy was almost

d'Italia: Ferrante and Galeazzo Maria Sforza, friendly enemies and hostile allies," in *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), 91-122.

³¹ Marco Pellegrini, *Le guerre d'Italia*, 40-3.

immediately recognized as a watershed in Italian history and the invasion ended a centuries-long practice of self-governance by the Italian city-states. The fury and cruelty of the French forces was shocking and unthinkable to Italian onlookers, who had grown accustomed to a more diplomacy-based warfare enacted by small mercenary forces with few pitched battles. Death tolls were counted in hundreds rather than thousands.³² The French ability to field and control such a vast, aggressive force on foreign terrain was the result of a long process of consolidation by the French Crown that finally bore fruit in the last decades of the *Quattrocento*.

The Italian regimes faced three distinct external challenges in the late-fifteenth century. From the east, Ottoman expansionism induced fear and, sometimes, rallying calls for a new crusade. The Venetian colonies in the Adriatic were especially vulnerable and Venice devoted efforts to defending its interests against the Turkish threat. From the West, the Aragonese-Castilian state sought to reintegrate the lands left to Ferdinand I of Naples, illegitimate son of Alfonso the Magnanimous, into their domains as a springboard for their own territorial expansion into the Mediterranean and against the Ottomans.³³ Lastly, from the north, the house of Valois, with claims to the Neapolitan throne, sought to expand its domain to include the Italian Mezzogiorno, the southern portion of the peninsula which now comprises the regions of Abruzzo, Apulia, Basilicata, Campania, Calabria, Molise and Sicily. It was the French Crown that first disrupted the balance of power in the late fifteenth century.

³² Mallett and Shaw, *The Italian Wars*, 20-25.

³³ See Andrew W. Devereux, "The Other Side of Empire: the Mediterranean and the Origins of a Spanish Imperial Ideology, 1479-1516," (Ph.D diss., Johns Hopkins, 2011).

When Charles VIII ascended to the French throne in 1491, the monarchy had been strengthened by military, administrative and dynastic successes over the course of the late fifteenth-century.³⁴ The Hundred Years' War and the civil wars between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians had left the French countryside devastated. Land went untilled and the peasantry migrated towards towns and other fortified places for protection. Fire, as ever, proved more of a weapon of destruction than swords or lances.³⁵ However, the Hundred Years' War finally ended in 1453 to the advantage of the French Crown. This success was in large part due to a series of military reforms that brought control of the French knights directly under the monarchy. When Louis XI succeeded to the throne, he continued his father's attempts at controlling the powerful French barons.³⁶ The death of Charles the Bold at the Battle of Nancy on 5 January 1477 brought to an end the Burgundian Wars and peace to a population long terrorized by troops described as *écorcheurs* (flayers).³⁷

Louis XI enacted a series of fiscal reforms, including a reduction of the *taille* in the regions most affected by the famine of 1481 and encouraged economic recovery by sponsoring innovation in mining and textile production. Thanks to the principles of

³⁴ Charles VIII inherited the Crown in 1483 at the age of 13, but his sister and her husband, Anne of France and Peter II of Bourbon, ruled as regents until 1491.

³⁵ Robert Boutruche, "The Devastation of Rural Areas during the Hundred Years War and the Agricultural Recovery of France," in *The Recovery of France in the fifteenth century*, ed. P. S. Lewis, trans. G.F. Martin (New York: Harper Row, 1972): 23-59. Originally published as "La Dévastation des campagnes pendant la guerre de Cent ans et la reconstruction de la France," *Mélanges 1945, III: Études historiques* (Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg), 127-63.

³⁶ Paul Ourliac, "The Concordat of 1472: An Essay on the Relations between Louis XI and Sixtus IV," in *The Recovery of France in the fifteenth-century* ed. P.S. Lewis, trans. G. F. Martin (New York: Harper Row, 1972): 102-184. Original Publication: "Le Concordat de 1472. Étude sur les rapports de Louis XI et de Sixte IV," *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, XXI (1942), 172-223; XXII (1943), 182.

³⁷ They sometimes even stripped their victims of their clothes. It was one of the great successes of Charles VII and Louis XI to have reintegrated these Great Companies of soldiers into the King's army. For one example of the effects of the *écorcheurs* on communities, see René Fédou, "Une Révolte populaire à Lyon au Xve siècle. La Rebeysse de 1436," *Cahiers d'histoire publiés par les Universités de Clermont-Lyon-Grenoble*, III (1958): 129-149.

appanage, when Rene of Anjou died in 1480 without an heir, his holdings reverted to the Crown. A wise marriage to Anne of Brittany in 1488 expanded the borders of the French state to 450,000 km (contemporary metropolitan France is approx. 550,000 km). The acquisition of Marseilles, an important Mediterranean port, rekindled the hegemonic and expansionist dreams of Louis IX and Charles of Anjou, couched now, as ever, in terms of a Christian crusade against heretics (Byzantium) and/or the infidel (Islam) for the recovery of the Holy Land. France was the largest state in Western Europe and had a well-funded military with no wars to fight on French soil. The Italian peninsula was an obvious starting point for ambitious plans, both because of its unique geographic location at the centre of the Mediterranean and its vast resources in terms of wealth and networks to far off lands. Louis XI left his son a secure, revenue-generating kingdom and subjects rather than vassals.³⁸ His successors followed an almost identical path, building on the fiscal and administrative reforms that made vast military projects, like an invasion of Italy, feasible.

French foreign policy had been entangled in the Italian peninsular politics ever since Charlemagne's 774 intervention in the conflict between Pope Adrian I and the Lombards. The French king maintained a web of alliances with the Italian powers.³⁹ Whereas Louis XI had largely ignored any obligations stemming from his agreements with the individual Italian powers, Charles VIII, who acceded to the throne a young and inexperienced man, eagerly took up the opportunity to make good his claim to the Neapolitan throne. The House of Anjou had been invited to govern the kingdom of

³⁸ Boutruche, "The devastation," 41-3; Barthélemy-Amédée Pocquet du Haut-Jussé, "Une Idée politique de Louis XI: la sujétion éclipse la vassalité," *Revue historique*, 226:2 (1961): 383-98.

³⁹ Georges Peyronnet, "The distant origins of the Italian wars: political relations between France and Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries," in *French Descent into Renaissance Italy*, ed. David Abulafia (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995): 29-47.

Naples in 1265 by Pope Clement IV, who sought the expulsion of the Hohenstaufen dynasty from Italy. Charles of Anjou, Louis IX's younger brother, was crowned in St. Peter's in 1266 by five cardinals and his descendants reigned in the kingdom of Naples until the childless Queen Joanna II of Naples in 1442 adopted Alfonso V, called "The Magnanimous," of Aragon. When Ludovico Sforza, the *de facto* ruler of Milan, invited him to challenge Aragonese rule in southern Italy, Charles VIII saw an opportunity to demonstrate his military prowess to subsequent generations. His court greedily sought the spoils, both in glory and material wealth, likely to accrue from such a campaign.

The French countryside no longer offered up bountiful opportunities for plunder and pillage, and the regional powers of Italy were centres of conspicuous wealth. Years of a quasi-monopoly in the Mediterranean brought the Italian merchants vast riches. Florence offers a pertinent and useful example; out of a total population of some thirty-five thousand inhabitants, some ten thousand men and women made ends meet by labouring in the cloth trade. Florence's economy, however, was diverse and dynamic. The most prosperous segment of the economy was banking and international commerce, from which derived the vast fortunes of families like the Medici, Pazzi, Pitti and Rucellai. One-fourth of the city's wealth (calculated in 1427 to exceed 10 million florins) was concentrated in only a hundred households. Cosimo de' Medici's personal fortune, estimated as 150,000 florins, exceeded that of many European monarchs.⁴⁰ Families like the Medici and Rucellai across Italy engaged in conspicuous expenditure on public

⁴⁰ See Gene Brucker, "Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence," in *Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2005), 115; Raymond de Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 1397-1494* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1963), esp. 31-34. A florin contained 3.5g of gold in 1427. Today, on the gold market, 3.5g of gold is worth approx. 200 USD. Using current gold prices, Cosimo was worth 29 million USD and the city's wealth in 1497 was almost 2 billion USD.

building projects and adorned their churches with the art for which Renaissance Italy is so famous.⁴¹

France, however, was not the only European monarchy with claims to the Neapolitan crown. In 1494, the House of Aragon ruled Naples and had done so since 1442. Alfonso V (the Magnanimous) of Aragon reigned over a vast conglomerate of lands including Barcelona, Malta, Valencia, Sicily and Naples. Upon his death in 1458, however, two parallel familial branches were established. His illegitimate son Ferdinand, known as Ferrante, inherited the Kingdom of Naples. Aragonese possessions in Iberia were bequeathed to Alfonso's younger brother, Giovanni II and subsequently Giovanni's son Ferdinand of Aragon, known as the Catholic.⁴² Ferrante faced some opposition to his reign, but not from his cousin's lands where the houses of Aragon and Castile were primarily concerned with the *Reconquista* of Spain.⁴³ While Ferrante asserted his control in the Neapolitan kingdom by force against an attack from Anjou and the barons of the Mezzogiorno in revolt, the Most Catholic monarchs likewise consolidated the power of the united Castilian-Aragonese monarchy.

The efforts of Isabella and Ferdinand brought great benefits to the kingdom of Naples. Jews from across the Spanish domains fled to Naples where they were welcomed by Ferrante. Naples was a safe harbour for more than just religious refugees during the

⁴¹ Leonardo da Vinci was painting his famous *Last Supper* during the 1490s for Ludovico Sforza. On artistic patronage in fifteenth-century Italy, see Dale V. Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁴² See Alan Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous, King of Aragon, Naples and Sicily, 1396-1458* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 201-421, esp. 410-421.

⁴³ J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716* (London: Penguin, 2002), esp. chapters 1-4; H. Kamen, *Spain, 1469-1714: A Society of Conflict* (New York: Longman, 1983), esp. 1-61; David Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms, The Struggle for Dominion 1200-1500* (London and New York: Longman, 1997), esp. 235-245.

fifteenth-century. The humanist and poet Giovanni Pontano founded the Accademia Pontaniana (still extant), and Italian intellectuals, among them many Florentines such as the reformed pornographer, Francesco Bandini, flocked to the Neapolitan court.⁴⁴ Southern Italy, however, was a difficult land to govern (then as now), and the house of Aragon-Naples was constantly beset with challenges from the powerful barons of the Mezzogiorno. Although they successfully maintained control of the Neapolitan kingdom in the decades leading up to the French invasion, this success was in large part due to Milanese support for their rule.⁴⁵ The breakdown in this relationship during the reign of Ferrante and under Galeazzo Maria and Ludovico il Moro was the first in a series of deadly blows to the house of Aragon-Naples. Conflict between the Sforza and Aragon-Naples, who had been allies against Papal interests for decades, circled around the figure of the duchess Isabella of Aragon, the daughter of Alfonso VI of Aragon (1494-5) and the wife of Giangaleazzo Sforza from whom Ludovico had usurped power.⁴⁶ While Ferrante reigned in Naples, his grand-daughter's complaints to her father, the Duke of Calabria, went unheeded, but when Alfonso came to power in 1494, Ludovico was fearful of what Neapolitan support for his nephew might bring.⁴⁷ He turned to a rival claimant to the Neapolitan throne, Charles VIII of France, for aid.

The specific invitation to cross the Alps by the *de facto* duke of Milan, Lodovico Sforza, was only the last in a lengthy list of such appeals: the Venetian republic had pleaded for intervention during the Ferrara War (1484) and Pope Innocent VIII had done

⁴⁴ David Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms*, 230-34.

⁴⁵ David Abulafia, "The inception of the reign of King Ferrante I of Naples: the events of summer 1458 in the light of documentation from Milan," in *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy 1494 -5*, edited by David Abulafia (Aldershot and Vermont: Variorum, 1995), 85-9.

⁴⁶ Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous*, 411.

⁴⁷ Ady, *A history of Milan*, 142-52.

so twice, during the Barons' War in 1486 and again in 1489.⁴⁸ Plans for a French invasion were years in the making.⁴⁹ The young king, heavily influenced by chivalric tales and his men of finance, had begun his preparations for conquering Naples as a base from which to launch a crusade in 1491.⁵⁰ Two key events were the catalysts for these plans: first, the arrival of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere at Avignon in May 1494. The holder of the see at Vincula, Giuliano della Rovere, and Rodrigo Borgia quarelled upon the latter's election to the Papal throne.⁵¹ After months of intrigue and a failed assassination plot, della Rovere sailed from Ostia to France where he joined his voice to the chorus inciting Charles VIII to war. Giuliano della Rovere's connections in his native Genoa made him a formidable ally in that he was able to help the French king raise the necessary funds for an invasion from Ligurian moneylenders; second, the arrival of the news of the death of Ferrante on 28 January 1494. Ferrante's heir, Alfonso of Naples, was notoriously unpopular with the Neapolitan barons after his bloody involvement in the Barons' Wars of the previous decades. Alexander VI nevertheless invested Alfonso of Naples as the head of the house of Aragon-Naples. Thus, the French descent into Italy also became an effort at ecclesiastical reform brought about by the Most Christian King of France, Charles VIII, and a strong, combative member of the upper echelon of a church corrupted

⁴⁸Brucker, "The Horseshoe Nail," 77-8.

⁴⁹ For details on the preparation for the expedition to Naples, see Ivan Cloulas, *Charles VIII et le mirage italien* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1986), esp. 38-56; Anne Denis, *Charles VIII et les italiens: histoire et mythe* (Geneva: Droz, 1979), esp. 10-11.

⁵⁰Peyronnet, "Distant Origins," 48-9.

⁵¹ Giuliano della Rovere had been a main player in church politics since the reign of Sixtus IV (his uncle). He was instrumental in the election of Innocent VIII and was a pillar of the latter's administration. Christine Shaw points out that despite frequent claims that Rodrigo Borgia and Giuliano della Rovere were already at odds before the papal election, we have no documentary evidence to support such a claim. See Christine Shaw, *Julian II: The Warrior Pope* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), esp. 50-96.

by a simoniacal pope.⁵² On 13 March 1494, Charles VIII took the title of King of Jerusalem and Sicily at Lyon. After a summer of foot-dragging that lulled Alfonso of Naples into a false sense of security for the upcoming winter, French troops crossed from France into Italy 3 September 1494. Charles VIII himself sailed to Asti with the siege engines.

The King of France arrived in Asti on 9 September 1494. He was forced to remain there until 6 October because of Aragonese troops and ships that had been sent out to obstruct his itinerary by attacking Genoa and preventing the city from providing Charles VIII with a safe harbour. A combined set of Milanese and French forces, led by Louis d'Orléans, Charles VIII's cousin and the future Louis XII, pushed back the 5000 Aragonese troops. The cannons on board the French ships were instrumental in a French naval victory at Rapallo.

The French invasion of Italy in 1494 was shocking to Italian observers both in terms of scale and ferocity. Francesco Guicciardini was not even a teenager when the French troops crossed the Alps. His account of Charles VIII's descent in the *Storia d'Italia* is worth citing directly for three reasons: his description has heavily influenced other accounts of these events both in the sixteenth century and our own; it is supported by current historical scholarship; his vocabulary and organization of content borrows directly from one of the authors on whom this dissertation is focused - Bernardo Rucellai.⁵³

⁵² Michael Mallett, "Personalities and Pressures: Italian involvement in the French invasion of 1494," in *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy*, ed. David Abulafia (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), 160.

⁵³ See chapters 4 & 5.

The French developed many infantry pieces which were even more maneuverable [than those introduced by the Venetians at the battle of Chioggia], constructed only of bronze. These were called cannons and they used iron cannonballs instead of stone as before, and this new shot was incomparably larger and heavier than that which had been previously employed. Furthermore, they were hauled on carriages drawn not by oxen as was the custom in Italy, but by horses, with such agility of manpower and tools assigned for this purpose that they almost always marched right along with the armies and were led right up to the walls and set into position there with incredible speed; and so little time elapsed between one shot and another and the shots were so frequent and so violent was their battering that in a few hours they could accomplish what previously in Italy used to require many days. They used this diabolical rather than human weapon not only in besieging cities but also in the field.⁵⁴

Guicciardini precedes his account of the French forces with a discussion of millenarianism and other prophetic movements present in Italy on the eve of the French invasion. Contemporary scholarship continues to place the French invasion as a watershed in Italian history and, as we will see, the religious fervour of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries is a relevant context for interpreting the Italian responses to these decades of warfare on the peninsula as waged by the other European powers.⁵⁵ Guicciardini further draws our attention to the new tactics and technology employed by the French in the 1494 campaign.⁵⁶ Over the course of the fifteenth-century, warfare between the Italian city-states increasingly turned from full-scale battles to a diplomacy-

⁵⁴ Francesco Guicciardini, *A History of Italy*, trans. Sidney Alexander (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 1, XI.

⁵⁵ See Norman Cohn, *The pursuit of the millenium: revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the Middle Ages* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). Cohn's thesis is that millenarianism emerges in the context of societal disaster among the marginalised of a society. The Savonarolan movement, however, poses an interesting challenge to his argument for it was publicly supported by many of Florence's leading men; see also J. R. Hale, "War and Public Opinion in Renaissance Italy," *Italian Renaissance Studies: A tribute to the late Cecilia M. Ady*, ed. E. F. Jacob (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960): 94-122.

⁵⁶ Simon Pepper, "The Face of the Siege: Fortification, Tactics and Strategy in the early Italian Wars," in *Italy and the European powers; the impact of war, 1500-1530*, ed. Christine Shaw (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006): 33-56.

based series of confrontations. Battles were small, took little time and the winners were usually determined at the negotiating table rather than by bloodshed.⁵⁷

This artillery made Charles' army all the more formidable throughout Italy; formidable, besides, not so much because of the number as for the valor of his troops. For, his men-at-arms were almost all the King's subjects and not plebeians but gentlemen whom the captains could not enlist or dismiss simply at their will; nor were they paid by the officers, but by the royal ministers. Furthermore, their companies were at full muster, the men in prime condition, their horses and arms in good order, since they were not constrained by poverty in providing for themselves.⁵⁸

The French forces were better-equipped and their loyalty was to the King rather than a *condottiere*. This did not prevent them from wreaking havoc in the Italian countryside by raping and pillaging. Indeed, they were actively encouraged to engage in these violent activities as a conscious tactic on the part of the French military commanders. The first example of this "barbaric" behaviour was on 19 October 1494 at Mordano, where all the inhabitants of this small Romagnol town were put to death -- including women and children.⁵⁹ The Italian accounts of the events, including those offered by Guicciardini and Rucellai, emphasise that the entire population, and not just able-bodied men, were massacred.⁶⁰ Current scholarship explains this breaking away from a tradition of clemency to the vanquished upon their surrender as a calculated attempt to strike terror in the population.⁶¹ The fear of extermination was a powerful tool in the French arsenal.

While the events at Mordano shocked Italian observers, the siege of Sarzana only three days later reinforced the growing terror in the face of the *furia francese*. On 22

⁵⁷ Cecil H. Clough, "The Romagna Campaign of 1494: a significant military endeavour," in *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy*, ed. David Abulafia (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), 193.

⁵⁸ Guicciardini, *A History of Italy*, 1, XI.

⁵⁹ I adopt, here, the terminology of the Italian observers.

⁶⁰ On Rucellai, see chapter 5. For Francesco Guicciardini, see for example the description of the sack of Fivizzano in *Storia d'Italia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), I, 14.

⁶¹ Pellegrini, *Le guerre d'Italia*, 29.

October 1494, the French artillery bombarded the citadel of Sarzanello, inside the city, and demonstrated the ineffectiveness of traditional fortifications against bronze cannons that launched metal rather than stone projectiles.⁶² The greater density and durability of metal projectiles was, in the end, what made 1494 the turning point in military technology rather than the invention of artillery itself. Stones weighed upwards of 300 pounds and broke upon impact. A fifty pound metal ball caused equivalent damage and used less gunpowder. Each Italian city would have had about three or four of these cannons, whereas Charles VIII mobilised over 40 cannons each being pulled by at most two pairs of horses.⁶³

Sarzana was the first and last of the great artillery bombardments by French forces during the reign of Charles VIII. Unsure of their success against Florence itself, a much larger target capable of raising the money for mercenary troops and a city of 35,000 inhabitants who might be expected to defend their city in the tight corners of an urban setting, the French forces again chose to use scare tactics against the Florentines. They chose to attack Fivizzano not only because of its strategic location in Lunigiana, but also because it was an easy target and they were supported by the local princeling, Gabriele Malaspina, who had recently lost control of the area to the Florentines. The cruelty of the

⁶² In response to this advent in siege technology, fortifications came to be buildà *la trace italienne*. See Bert S. Hall, *Weapons and Warfare in Renaissance Europe: Gunpowder, Technology, and Tactics* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997), esp. 158-164. See also Michael Mallett, "The transformation of war, 1494-1530," in *Italy and the European Powers: The Impact of War, 1500-1530*, ed. Christine Shaw (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006): 3-21; Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁶³ Pellegrini, *Le guerre d'Italia*, 30-32.

siege was unprecedented and, again, all the inhabitants who surrendered were slaughtered.⁶⁴

The massacres at Mordano and Fivizzano yielded results. The Florentines were terrified, but divided as to the correct response to the approaching French forces. A group whose financial interests were embroiled in Naples and the Papal States were loathe to turn their backs on their allies. Another group, with assets in Lyon estimated at 300,000 ducats, sought reconciliation with the King of France at all costs.⁶⁵ Thus, it was without the support of the Florentine governing body, the *Signoria*, that Piero de' Medici travelled to Sarzana to meet with Charles VIII in person. It is also at this juncture, in the face of the *furia francese* and fears that the French troops would winter in Milanese territory, that Ludovico Sforza offered to mediate between the two powers. Faced with the force and ferocity of French military engagement, Piero de' Medici agreed to all of Charles VIII's terms on 1 November 1494: he gave over the fortresses of Sarzana, Sarzanello, Pietrasanta, Pisa, Ripafratta and Livorno to the French king. Most likely he sought to get the French forces beyond Florentine lands as swiftly as possible. His relinquishing of Florentine-governed Pisa to French control particularly infuriated the Florentines and would remain a divisive issue for the city both in terms of domestic governance and foreign policy in the decades to come.⁶⁶

The *Signoria* responded to Piero de' Medici's perceived treachery on 9 November 1494 by expelling him from the city and its domains *in absentia* and confiscating Medici property. Decades of Medici rule in Florence were brought to an end. Charles VIII,

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 34.

⁶⁵Brown, "The Revolution of 1494," 20.

⁶⁶Pellegrini, *Le Guerre d'Italia*, 34-7.

however, was eager to enforce the agreement of 1 November and marched his army to Pisa where he began planning the siege of Florence in order to reinstate a Medici government that would support his campaign against Naples.

Into the power vacuum in Florence stepped a Dominican friar, Girolamo Savonarola, with a message of reform. From his pulpit, Savonarola argued that the scourge of the French forces was divinely inspired in order to bring about both moral and political reform. He called Charles VIII a New Cyrus and foretold of a new era of virtuous living with a reformed Florence as a 'New Jerusalem.' The violence was interpreted as a purgative that would cure the peninsula of its political-social illnesses.⁶⁷ His message was supported by influential political figures like Francesco Valori as well as the general populace.⁶⁸

Florentine representatives, including Bernardo Rucellai, were dispatched to Pisa to negotiate with Charles VIII. There were three rounds of negotiations, the discussion of which takes up some ten percent of Rucellai's *De bello italico*. Charles VIII was convinced to spare Florence by the argument that an urban landscape was a difficult battleground for his troops whom the Florentines (rightly) feared. If Piero de' Medici indeed acquiesced to Charles VIII's demands in order to get the French troops out of Florentine territories as quickly as possible, his gambit was successful. Charles VIII led

⁶⁷ Jean-Louis Fournel and Jean-Claude Zancarini, *La politique de l'expérience: Savonarole, Guicciardini et le républicanisme florentin* (Turin: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2002), esp. 55-73.

⁶⁸ Donald Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), esp. 112-137. See also Lauro Martines, *Fire in the City: Savonarola and the Struggle for the Soul of Renaissance Florence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Lorenzo Polizzotto, *The Elect Nation: The Savonarolan Movement in Florence, 1494-1545* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).

his troops into Lazio before December began.⁶⁹ The Florentine government had defended the city from rape, pillage and massacre, but once the immediate crisis had been averted, factionalism continued to plague the functioning of government. A complete restructuring of the governing bodies, including the introduction of a 4000 person great council modelled on the Venetian government, was brought about in 1494 -- to the consternation of many of the traditional ruling families of Florence who had supported the Medici regime throughout the fifteenth century.⁷⁰

As the French forces advanced towards Rome, those cardinals opposed to Alexander VI, such as Giuliano della Rovere (the future Pope Julius II) and the French Cardinal Peraud were encouraged by Charles VIII's support of ecclesiastical reform and called for a new conclave. The army left the Tuscan town of Siena on 4 December and arrived at Montalcino, a Tuscan town under papal rule, the next day. Facing no opposition at the fortress of Acquapendente, Charles VIII rested his troops that Sunday. The king entered the city of Viterbo, about 80 kilometres north of Rome on the Via Cassia, on 10 December. It was clear that if a resistance was not mounted before Charles VIII crossed the natural boundaries created by Civitavecchia, Viterbo, Orvieto and Perugia, a defence of Rome would be well-nigh impossible.⁷¹ Ostia, the Roman port and a strong citadel, had fallen out of the control of the Roman curia and into the hands of the Colonna family (French allies since June) months earlier. The papacy was in many ways

⁶⁹ Pellegrini, *Le guerre d'Italia*, 38.

⁷⁰ The internal Florentine political struggle is a main topic of chapter 4. On the constitutional reform in Florence, see Nicolai Rubinstein, "Politics and Constitution in Florence at the End of the Fifteenth Century," in *Italian Renaissance Studies*, ed. E. F. Jacob (London: Faber and Faber, 1960): 148-183; Butters, *Governors and Government*, 22-36.

⁷¹ Rome itself offers little in the way of natural defences. The only other defensible boundary in the area is south of Rome and about 80 kilometres west of Naples at Montecassino where the Allied forces, predominantly Polish, fought for months before ousting the German troops from the monastery in 1945.

undone by the notorious perfidy of the Roman barons.⁷² Upon hearing the news that Charles VIII was again on the move on 14 December, Virginio Orsini, *condottiere* and head of the great baronial family, offered his castles up to king in the hope that they would stay out of the hands of his rivals, the Colonna.⁷³ This left Alexander VI without a military commander to oversee the defence of Rome. Civitavecchia came under French control on 17 December and, three days later the troops regrouped at Ostia. Supply lines to the city, where a small Neapolitan force under the command of Ferrandino, Duke of Calabria, remained encamped, were cut. The situation was so perilous that on 18 December, the Borgia Pope (and many of his cardinals) sent their valuables to Naples by ship.

Alexander VI, however, could not give up Rome without effectively, if not legally, abdicating. Instead, he aimed to take shelter in the Castel Sant'Angelo and withstand a protracted siege. A violent rainstorm on 23 December, interpreted by many as the divine hand at play, caused a portion of the fortress' walls to cave in and Charles VIII was spared having to decide whether or not he would commit such an impiety as launching artillery at some of the holiest of Christian sights. On Christmas day of 1494, the French king sent his terms to the pontiff: his investiture as king of Naples, custody of the Ottoman prince and brother of Bayazet, Djem (who had fled to Rome upon his brother's accession) and control of the Castel Sant'Angelo itself. In an act of clemency, either to

⁷² Many of the Roman barons also held land in the kingdom of Naples and, as such, had an equal claim of loyalty to the King of Naples. See Shaw, "The Papacy, 109.

⁷³ Virginio Orsini was in the pay of Alfonso II of Naples. While he gave up his lands to the French, he himself went to Naples to serve the king. Charles VIII captured Virginio and Niccolò Orsini when he took Naples and Virginio lost two counties, namely Tagliacozzo and Albi. Niccolò escaped after Fornovo and Virginio was released when Charles VIII returned to Asti. See Christine Shaw, *The Political role of the Orsini family from Sixtus IV to Clement VII* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 2007), 180-181.

save the Eternal City from destruction or to spare the lives of his troops, he also offered a one-day truce to Ferrandino and the Neapolitan forces that would permit them to retreat. They left Rome before daybreak by the San Lorenzo gate. The avant-garde of the French forces entered the city on 29 December. The king himself arrived on New Year's Eve.⁷⁴

Despite his declared intention of enacting church reform and the protests of the cardinals della Rovere, Sforza, Péraud, Savelli, Lunati and others, Charles VIII did not tarry in Rome for a conclave.⁷⁵ Rather he kept up the rapid pace of the advancement that was now four months old. On 11 January 1495, Alexander VI granted the French king and his troops safe passage to Naples. The Pope's son, Cesare Borgia, was taken in surety for four months to ensure that the agreement reached on 15 January was fulfilled. Alexander VI reigned another nine years.

The French advance brought an already tense situation in the Mezzogiorno to a boiling point. Aragonese control of the countryside had been tenuous at best in the years leading up to 1494. There had been two baronial revolts, incited by the Papacy, since the peace of Lodi in 1454. The kings of Naples had harshly put down these insurrections again and again and their brutality fostered resentment. To make matters even worse, the Neapolitans were numerically outmatched by the French with 20,000 cavalry and 15,000 infantry against 5,000 or 6,000 cavalry and 12,000 footsoldiers. The population welcomed Charles VIII as a liberator and on 21 January 1485 Alfonso II abdicated in favour of his son, Ferrandino (Ferdinand II) who, he hoped, would be better able to

⁷⁴ Yvonne Labande-Mailfert, *Charles VIII et son milieu: 1470-1498: La jeunesse au pouvoir* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1975), 300-315.

⁷⁵ The primary source for Charles' brief stay in Rome is the journal of Johann Burchard, Alexander VI's master of ceremonies. Johann Burchard, *At the court of the Borgia*, trans. Geoffrey Parker (London: The Folio Society, 1963), 90-120.

negotiate with the army at his doorstep.⁷⁶ Alfonso fled to Sicily and died in a monastery before the end of 1495. His abdication was trumpeted as yet another sign of divine favour for Charles VIII.

The very few strongholds of pro-Aragonese loyalty were subjected to ferocious attacks by the French troops that, in the end, would greatly undermine popular support for French rule in the Mezzogiorno. For example, at Ciociara, a small group of Aragonese barons and their community remained a thorn in Charles VIII's side by blocking his advancement to the river Liri. Rather than fighting a pitched battle at each stronghold still loyal to Ferrandino, the French forces yet again used violence against the local population to discourage any who might dare to hold out against them. The target of this exemplary savagery was Monte San Giovanni, the fief of d'Avalos, who was a naval commander for Ferrandino. The citadel was well-situated and defended by the local population rather than a mercenary force. In order to inflict a terrible punishment on these most loyal of Aragonese subjects, the French cannons were transported within reach of the town walls and pounded for four hours; they opened three breaches in three separate places through which three columns passed. The garrison was quickly overwhelmed and San Giovanni came under French control.

Charles VIII's clemency evidenced at Rome was not forthcoming. Instead, in a savage reenactment of the events at Fivizzano, the defenders not killed in battle were

⁷⁶ On Ferrandino see Benedetto Croce, *Storie e Leggende Napoletane* (Milan: Adelphi Edizioni, 1990), 157-179.

massacred by the French forces. The vast majority of the garrison came from the local countryside and over 700 people were put to death.⁷⁷

Ferrandino, now King of Naples after his father's abdication earlier that month, brought his remaining troops, consisting of 4000 cavalry and 6000 infantry to Capua in order to block the French advance on Naples. The *furia francese* had, once again, taken its toll on the local population. The Capuans entreated Ferrandino to return to Naples for more reinforcements. As soon as he left the area, the city-dwellers revolted and ejected the Aragonese forces from their walls to open their arms in welcome to the French. By 18 February 1495, Charles VIII was in Capua and Naples was rioting not only against the Aragonese monarchy, but also against the administrative class that had helped it to govern. Ferrandino retreated to the island of Ischia to wait for help from his second cousin, Ferdinand the Catholic of Spain. Charles VIII finally entered Naples in ceremonial garb on 22 February 1495 and was welcomed by the population as a Messiah.⁷⁸ The French descent took just under six months. Alexander VI allegedly declared that the French had won Italy 'with a piece of chalk,' a reference to how the French army marked the houses that would quarter their soldiers with white chalk.⁷⁹ They had not fought a single battle.

Venice, up until this point, had not involved herself in the power struggle on the peninsula. Her *terrafirma* lands had not been in the path of the advancing French forces and the Turkish threat to her Adriatic possessions, like Cyprus and Dalmatia, were of

⁷⁷Pellegrini, *Le guerre d'Italia*, 47.

⁷⁸Labande-Mailfert, *Charles VIII*, 340.

⁷⁹Philippe de Commines, *Mémoires* (Geneva: Droz, 2007) VII, 14: "Et, comme a dit ce pape Alexandre qui regne, les François y sont alléz avecques des esperons de boys, et de la craye en la main des fourriers pour marcher logis, sans aultre peyne."

greater concern to a maritime empire that required vast forests to maintain its fleet and grain to feed its populations.⁸⁰ Unlike the other Italian powers, Venice was not plagued by faction (or so they convinced themselves and others) and did not need to rely on the help of allies to defend herself.⁸¹ Rule by a small, tightly-knit oligarchy had brought many advantages to Venice: unlike Hungary or Milan, she was able to withstand the death of a ruler. Furthermore, the commercial interests of this oligarchy contributed to centuries of consistent foreign policy: prevent any other power from arming a rival fleet in the Adriatic. Venetian interests on the peninsula consisted largely in disturbing the balance of power in order to benefit from the ensuing disorder by acquiring lands.⁸² However, just as it was imperative that the Adriatic be free of rival powers, so too was it imperative that the peninsula be free of any power capable of challenging Venice on its own. The overwhelming success of the French advance, which brought the lion's share of the peninsula under the sway of a power capable of amassing both a large army and a substantial fleet posed a serious threat to Venetian foreign policy.

Thus, when King Ferrandino realised that he did not have the resources, on his own, to regain control of the Kingdom of Naples from Charles VIII and the French army, he turned to the Venetians for aid. In return for a loan of 200,000 ducats (approx. 40,000,000 USD today) he offered Venice the ports of Trani, Brindisi and Otranto until the money was repaid. Apulia had always been Venice's chief source of grain and

⁸⁰ Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice Triumphant: The Horizons of a Myth* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), esp. 97-137; Karl Appuhn, *A Forest on the Sea: Environmental Expertise in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), esp. 94-143.

⁸¹ Humfrey C. Butters, "Politics and Diplomacy in Late Quattrocento Italy: the Case of the Barons' War (1485-86)," in *Florence and Italy: Renaissance Studies in Honour of Nicolai Rubinstein*, ed. Peter Denley and Caroline Elam (London: Westfield College, 1988), 16. The Venetian elective body and oligarchical rule was the paradigm for harmonious urban government adopted by writers like Rucellai and Machiavelli as well as by preachers like Savonarola.

⁸² See Lane, *Venice*, 201-241.

remained so even after her fifteenth-century expansion in northern Italy. Venice had regularly intervened in the upheavals in Apulia, seeking concessions from the various rulers, combatting piracy in the Adriatic and defending Christian interests against Saracens and Turks. The Venetians acquired, legitimately, what they had craved for half a millenium. They were also now committed to expelling the French from the peninsula.⁸³

Alexander VI joined the Venetian coalition, renamed the *Lega santa*, in early 1495. He feared that Charles VIII's promised ecclesiastical reform would actually take place now that the Neapolitan Kingdom had been brought under French control. The three Italian powers, Milan, Venice and the Papacy, were joined by England and Spain who also hoped to see the French defeated in Italy. Florence, however, remained committed to a French alliance for it was believed that Charles VIII, having accomplished his goals on the peninsula with Florentine support, would return Pisa to Florentine subjugation.⁸⁴ The Holy League officially aimed to combat transalpine control of the peninsula and organize an attack against the infidels. This latter goal was shared not only with Charles VIII, whose initial attempts at engaging the Turks in Albania were cut short by the challenge posed by the newly-unified Italian front, but also Renaissance humanists whose crusade literature contributed to the development of a new sense European identity and of Eastern otherness.⁸⁵

⁸³ Carol Kidwell, "Venice, the French invasion and the Apulian ports," in *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy*, ed. David Abulafia (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), 298-300.

⁸⁴ Nicolai Rubinstein, "The Empire," 144-5.

⁸⁵ Pellegini, *Le guerre d'Italia*, 52-3. See also Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 111-207.

Without delay, the Venetians put 20,000 men onto the battlefield under the command of Francesco Gonzaga, duke of Mantua. Italy threatened to become a “serpents' den” for Charles VIII, as communication with the supply lines wavered, native populations became disenchanted with their 'liberators' and barons reconsidered their allegiances.⁸⁶ Charles VIII decided to withdraw in late Spring 1495 and left behind 10,000 combatants and 60 artillery guns, including 16 large cannons to defend the Kingdom of Naples against the foreseeable response from the Spanish-Aragonese line.⁸⁷

Having split his forces, the numerical superiority that had been so essential to French success in 1494 was overturned. Charles lost troops to desertion, illness (especially syphilis) and had cut his army in half to defend Naples. Gonzaga, commander of the Venetian forces, had 23,000 men -- more than double the size of the French force engaged at Fornovo. The notoriety of the “indestructible” French forces still played a role in the outcome of the battle in that Gonzaga chose his terrain for engaging with French troops to counteract the strength of a French cavalry charge. This decision left the town of Pontremoli undefended against sacking by the French.

Gonzaga divided his force into three and left the Albanian contingent of his army to face the French head-on. When the opportunity to plunder a baggage train enriched with Neapolitan spoils presented itself, they broke formation and left the way open for a French retreat through the *val Padana* which Ludovico Sforza had been assigned to

⁸⁶ This metaphor indeed is employed by Bernardo Rucellai to describe Italy after the battle of Fornovo. See below, pg. 127.

⁸⁷ Pellegrini, *Le guerre d'Italia*, 54-5.

defend. Thus, the disunity that plagued the Italian states as a whole was played out on the battlefield.⁸⁸

Charles VIII maintained control over the *Mezzogiorno* for only sixteenth months. The young French king had inherited his domain from a great consolidator of monarchical power, Louis XI, and was inexperienced in the art of appeasing contending factions. His troops were hated for their brutality and his rule failed to bring about the dividends in terms of land grants and administrative positions that the barons of the *Mezzogiorno*, who had supported him in favour of the Aragonese dynasty, had anticipated. In early spring 1495, Ferrandino disembarked in Calabria and was welcomed by a populace now disenchanted with the one-time liberators who proved to be arrogant and greedy. The French forces fled to the Adriatic coast and Venice, in exchange for the control of certain Apulian ports, namely Trani, Monopoli, Mola, Polignano, Gallipoli, Otranto and Brindisi, provided formidable help. Ferrandino and his uncle, Federico sparked insurrections while King Ferdinand the Catholic of Spain prepared an army in Sicily to aid his Aragonese cousins. In exchange for help from the Spanish-Aragon line, Ferrandino married his seventeen year-old Aunt.⁸⁹

Although primarily occupied with his holdings in Iberia, Ferdinand the Catholic had not been entirely unconcerned with his cousin's lands in southern Italy. He had sent aid during the second baronial rebellion of 1485-6. He sent aid to Naples in 1495. The Spanish infantry, under the command of Gonzalo de Còrdoba, engaged with the French forces on 28 June 1495 at the first battle of Seminara and were defeated by Charles VIII's

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 57-8.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 59-60.

Swiss pikemen.⁹⁰ The Aragonese forces slowly took back the Mezzogiorno and reformed their military tactics. They increased the light cavalry component in their army to better collaborate with infantry as well as enact their traditional roles of scouting, foraging and harassing a retreating enemy.⁹¹

Ferrandino re-entered Naples to great rejoicing on 7 July 1495, but it took another year to oust the remaining French forces from their fortified positions in the city. French capitulation finally occurred on 23 June 1496. Ferrandino, however, was not able to enjoy the fruits of his efforts for he fell ill three months after the expulsion of the French forces. The popular young king died in Naples on 7 October 1496.⁹² He left no direct heirs.

The French and Spanish monarchies were both avid to enter into the power vacuum in the kingdom of Naples. However, the barons and the towns backed Federigo, son of Ferrante of Naples and uncle of Ferrandino.⁹³ Dissatisfied, the ultramontane monarchies rapidly sought to undermine Federico's rule in the Mezzogiorno, their machinations culminating in the secret Treaty of Granada of 1500.⁹⁴

The Venetian involvement in the *Lega santa* and the successful restoration of the Aragonese dynasty in Naples served as catalysts for the development of a political-ideological orientation on the Italian peninsula that was shared by the ruling classes across the peninsula. The catch phrases for this movement were *buoni italiani* and *libertà*

⁹⁰ *El Gran Capitàn*, as he was known, acquired a reputation as a protector of the Jews in Aragonese lands. See David Abulafia, "Ferdinand the Catholic and the Kingdom of Naples," in *Italy and the European Powers: The Impact of War, 1500-1530*, ed. Christine Shaw (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 153-4; Mallett, "The Transformation," 7.

⁹¹ Mallett, "The Transformation," 11.

⁹² Jerry H. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 37.

⁹³ Pellegrini, *Le guerre d'Italia*, 59-61.

⁹⁴ Abulafia, "Ferdinand the Catholic," 141; Mallett and Shaw, *The Italian Wars*, 58.

d'Italia. These terms described the proponents of a strategic line that attempted to revive the political systems in force in Italy at a perceived time of "political balance" between the Peace of Lodi in 1454 and the French invasion of 1494.⁹⁵ As a political program, the *libertà d'Italia* demanded the expulsion of the transalpine foreigners from Italy and the reconstruction of a multi-state structure that was balanced and ruled by natives.⁹⁶

Transalpine becomes a synonym for foreign, and it was not immediately clear after the successes at the Battle of Fornovo and in the *Mezzogiorno* that these aspirations to expel the foreigners from the peninsula would never be realized. The speed and magnitude of the French advance was as shocking to the Italian onlookers as the violence brought to bear on the local populations. The vulnerability of the Italian city-states, whose leaders had been powerless to stop the killing and pillaging during the French descent, had been inexorably demonstrated. Conflict would begin anew upon Louis XII's accension to the French throne in 1498 and Italy would serve as a theatre of war for the Hapsburg and Valois monarchies until the mid-sixteenth century until the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559. The infamous sacking of Rome by predominantly Lutheran soldiers in 1527 is but one example of many cities that were put to flame during the Italian Wars; Genoa, the city-state that largely financed the imperial government through their administration of imperial letters of credit, was ravaged twice, in 1507 and 1522.⁹⁷

As wars were waged and cities were held ransom by mercenary forces, the political elite continued in their activities: as authors, translators, pedagogues, politicians and diplomats. As the Italian political landscape was radically changing, men-of-letters

⁹⁵ Riccardo Fubini, "Lega italica e 'politica dell'equilibrio' all'avvento di Lorenzo de' Medici al potere," in *Italia Quattrocentesca: Politica e diplomazia nell'età di Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1994): 185-219.

⁹⁶ Pellegrini, *Le guerre d'Italia*, 59-60.

⁹⁷ Mallett and Shaw, *The Italian Wars*, 83, 144 and 165.

and learning met, conversed and tried to make sense of the embroilment. In Florence, one space was particularly renowned for its calm and depth: Bernardo Rucellai's *Orti Oricellari*.

Chapter Two: The People and Space of the *Orti Oricellari*

As wars raged on the Italian peninsula, a group of Florentine politicians and men-of-letters sought refuge from the violence and tumult within the walls of Bernardo Rucellai's gardens. Diplomats, artists, mathematicians, these members of the political elite all sat under the shade of many different species of trees and conversed on topics such as literature, history and philosophy. Giovanni Canacci, Giovanni Corsi, Pietro Crinito, Francesco Cattani da Diaccetto, Bartolommeo della Fonte, Piero Martelli, Cosimo Pazzi, Bindaccio Ricasoli and Francesco Vettori attended *ad hoc* meetings, readings, debates and performances, where the cultural elite of Florence demonstrated their high intellectual standards and engaged in lively discourse.⁹⁸ Environments like the *Orti Oricellarii*, outside of the purview of any formal educational or theological institution and centred around one or two charismatic figures, appeared throughout Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and were integral to the development of influential early modern institutions such as the *Academie Royale Française*.⁹⁹ At the inception of this movement, however, these sodalities thrived without any formal structure or support.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the term *academia*, which harkens back to the meetings of Plato in classical Athens as well as Cicero's *De Officiis*, had a wide array of meanings including a primary school or a set of books.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ See below p. 50-1, Table 1.

⁹⁹ See Marianne Pade (ed.), *On Renaissance Academies* (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2011); Frances A. Yates, "The Italian Academies," in *Renaissance and Reform: The Italian Contribution* (London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), II, 6-29.

¹⁰⁰ David S. Chambers, "The Earlier 'Academies' in Italy," in *Italian Academies of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. D. S. Chambers and F. Quiviger (London: Warburg Institute, 1995): 1-14.

¹⁰¹ James Hankins, *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2003), 2: 224.

The writings of the *Orti* group betray no mention of the term *academia*. Instead, they focus on the classical garden as the setting for reflection and debate. Perhaps the avoidance of the term *academia* was a conscious effort among the group to dissociate themselves from institutions and to explore and expand outside the confines of supervision. Among them are historians who used this environment as a platform from which to find a solution to the problem that was facing them in the process of mediating the effects of the Italian Wars on Italian politics and culture. The conversations they had in the evening under the shade of Rucellai's trees are the context out of which the balance of power metaphor and a new mode of historical writing developed. The setting, both physical and social, that was integral to their intellectual formation and their sodality merits some concerted attention. In their meetings, information leaped from the pages of their books, which they would have shared, into voice. This performative space was also one for the acquisition and sharing of knowledge. This chapter seeks to offer a prosopography of the ten men who met in Rucellai's gardens in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Florence in order to better understand the nature of their interactions as well as the context for their intellectual pursuits.

The Physical Setting

The Rucellai family, through their construction of *Palazzo Rucellai* (Figure 1) at Villa della Vigna Nuova, 18 and the facade, by Alberti, of Santa Maria Novella (Figure 2)-- the only Renaissance church facade remaining in Florence – left their mark on the Florentine urban landscape.¹⁰² Although the villa has undergone many changes since its

¹⁰² On how cultural interests and aspirations can be interpreted as political propaganda, see D. V. Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance*, esp. 41-128; 366-384.

construction in the late *quattrocento*, the Giardino degli Orti Oricellari, at Via Bernardo Rucellai, 6, just west of the train station, remains accessible to an adventurous tourist.¹⁰³ Bernardo Rucellai bought what had been a large vegetable garden in 1489 and remade it into a splendid wooded garden as a centre of learning complete with a beautiful palazzo. The name of these gardens is a Latinized version of the family's surname.¹⁰⁴



Figure 1: Palazzo Rucellai

¹⁰³ "Orti Oricellari," Regione Toscana Giunta Regionale, Direzione Generale Politiche Formative, Beni e Attività Culturali, accessed 25 August 2015. <http://www.firenze-tourism.com/en/florence-attractions/florence-parks-and-gardens/orti-oricellari.html>

¹⁰⁴ Leonardo Ginori Lisci, *The Palazzi of Florence: Their History and Art*, trans. Jennifer Grillo, vol. 1 (Rome, Giunti Barbèra, 1985), 301-8.

The *Orti Oricellari* has been the site of many important gatherings, both literary and actual. George Eliot's novel, *Romola*, takes place in fifteenth-century Florence, and Rucellai's home and gardens serve as the setting for numerous scenes. Niccolò Machiavelli's *Arte della Guerra*, a dialogue on military theory and tactics, is set in the “darkest and shadiest section” of the *Orti Oricellari*, with Bernardo Rucellai's grandson, Cosimo, as a main interlocutor.¹⁰⁵ Fabrizio Colonna, who is often interpreted as representing Machiavelli himself, expresses his delight at the trees in the gardens and their classical layout, yet chides that

How much better would they have done ... to seek to resemble the ancients in strong and bitter things instead of the delicate and soft and in those things which they did under the sun, not in shadows and to seize from the habits of the ancients true and perfect things, not false and corrupt ones.¹⁰⁶

This condemnation of Bernardo Rucellai's interest in classical horticulture as delicate and soft, however, is immediately challenged by Cosimo, who defends and explains his grandfather's aims in constructing the *Orti Oricellari*:

I want to go back to what you said before: that my grandfather and yours would have done more wisely to resemble the ancients in the harsh things than in delicate. ... In his time, no man so hated soft-living than he, and he was much of the lover of harshness of life that you praise; nevertheless ... he recognized he could not practice it in his personal life, nor in that of his sons, having been born in so corrupted an age, where anyone who wanted to depart from the common usage would be infamous and reviled by everyone.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Dell'arte della guerra*, in *Opere*, ed. Corrado Vivanti, Vol. 1 (Turin: Einaudi-Gallimard, 1997), 1:12.

¹⁰⁶ Machiavelli, *Dell'arte della Guerra*, in *Opere*, ed. Corrado Vivanti (Turin: Einaudi-Gallimard, 1997) I, 1:17: “quanto meglio arebbono fatto quegli (sia detto con pace di tutti) a cercare di somigliare gli antichi nelle cose forti e aspre, non nelle delicate e molli, e in quelle che facevano sotto il sole, non sotto l'ombra, e pigliare i modi della antichità vera e perfetta, non quegli della falsa e corrotta.”

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 1: 23-5: “Io voglio tornare a quello che voi dicesti prima: che lo avolo mio e quegli vostri arebbero fatto più saviamente a somigliare gli antichi nelle cose aspre che nelle delicate. ... Io non credo ch'egli fusse, ne' tempi suoi, uomo che tanto detestasse il vivere molle quanto egli, e che tanto fusse amatore di quella

Cosimo provides an overview of his grandfather's substantial accomplishments in the study of antiquities, including the publication of the *De Urbe Roma*, the first scholarly work on Roman epigraphy and concludes that "shocked by these present ways of living, he left the ancients and in what he was able to imitate with less admiration, he did."¹⁰⁸ Fabrizio, in turn, applauds Cosimo's defense of his grandfather and asserts its accuracy: "It is certain that you speak the truth!"¹⁰⁹ The *Orti Oricellari* offer a space, in *Arte della guerra*, for investigating the customs of the ancients despite the corruption of contemporary times. The four hundredth anniversary of Machiavelli's birth was celebrated there in 1869.¹¹⁰

The *Arte della Guerra* offers a fictionalized account of the gatherings that took place in the Orti Oricellari. One of the participants in the gatherings, Pietro del Riccio Baldi, called Crinito, wrote a panegyric to the venue that was published in 1504 with his work *De honesta disciplina*. The poem, addressed to Faustus, praises the Orti Oricellari for its classical themes, quiet respite and vantage point for observing the city and countryside: "From there you will see Flora's quite high walls / and two-peaked Faesula."¹¹¹ The gardens are presented as a sylvan paradise within the urban landscape:

It is delightful, Faustus, to wander through the sacred wood
when the poplar enters spring,
and when the pine leaves,
treasured by ancient prophets, hiss out at the green.

asprezza di vita che voi lodate; nondimeno e' conosceva non potere nella person sua né in quella de'suoi figliuoli usarla, essendo nato in tanta corrutela di secolo, dove uno che si volesse partire dal comune uso sarebbe infame e vilipeso da ciascheduno."

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 28: "talché, sbigottito da questi modi del vivere presente, egli lasciò gli antichi, e in quello che potette con minore ammirazione imitare l'antichità, lo fece."

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1: 29.

¹¹⁰ Ginori Lisici, *The Palazzi of Florence*, 306.

¹¹¹ Pietro Crinito, "Ad Faustum de Sylva Oricellaria," in Anna Mastrogianni (ed.), *Die Poemata des Petrus Crinitus und ihre Horazimitation* (Munich: Lit, 2002): I, IX, 7-8: "Hinc sat videbis alta Florae moenia / Et Fasulas bivertices." A special thank you to Troy Tower for his English translation of this poem.

Growing up to the stars of highest Jove, the oak
extends its great arms:
and the nearby cork-tree with its pumice-bark
grows green through rival branches.¹¹²

Figures of classical mythology frolic alongside woodland wildlife in this bucolic space. The poem ends with jubilant praise for the space as one especially conducive to quiet reflection away from the cares of the political world:

How much will the charm of this garden close by
Bloom in line with its planted firs?
Either the verdant foliage in the florid meadows
or the grasses' grooming will arrest you:
whatever it might be, furnished there are those luxuries
that gently nurture our cares,
and o! he of lucky stock, stranger to the arena of envying,
who, beneath the aged holm-oak,
either provides for the sacred words of poets or,
freer from his own affairs, nurtures learned leisure.
As such that man esteems nothing of the passions of princes,
nor does he support the scepters of kings.
but gets held up in verdant grasses
and saves himself for coming generations.¹¹³

The Social Setting

Since Felix Gilbert's 1949 publication of "Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari: A Study on the Origin of Modern Political Thought," scholars have divided the gatherings into two distinct periods. The first period was probably between 1500 and 1506 and was presided over by Bernardo Rucellai; the second period, during the 1520s,

¹¹²*Ibid.*, I, IX, 11-18: "Libet vagari Fauste per sacrum nemus / Dum vernat alta populus, / Et dum virenti sibilat pinus coma. / Amata priscis vatibus. / In altra surgens maximi / quercus Iovis / Protendit alta brachia, / Suberque iuxta pumicoso cortice / Ramis virescit aemulis.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, I, IX, 57-70: "Quantum propinqui floret horti amoenitas / Cum consitis abretibus. / Seu te virentes floreis pratis comae / Seu cultus herbarum capit. / Utcumque sit parantur illa commoda, / Quae molliter curas fovent. / Et O Beatum, qui sub antique ilice / Liventis expers ambitus / Vel sacra vatum curat, aut doctum otium / Curis solutior fovt. / Sic ille nil miratur aestus principum / Nec sceptrum regum suspicit. / Sed in virenti detinetur gramine, / Et se referuat posteris."

was presided over by his grandson, Cosimo.¹¹⁴ There are two main primary source accounts of the first period of activity in the *Orti Oricellari*: three chapters in the *De Honesta Disciplina* by Pietro Crinito (1465-1505) and the *Ragionamento intorno alla lingua* by Giovan-Battista Gelli (1498-1563).

On three separate occasions Pietro Crinito provides "once in the Rucellai gardens" to offer a context for his ruminations on critical philology in the *De honesta disciplina*. In Book II, chapter 14, Crinito tells us that the republic of Venice and its government was recently discussed in the *Orti* by the most learned men who met there:

In the Rucellai gardens where recently several excellently learned men came together, where one often and copiously treats of distinguished letters and the best teaching, by chance there was made a mention concerning the institutions of old, concerning the city and how it should be run and concerning the most famous and greatest dominion of Venice.¹¹⁵

He unfortunately does not provide a list of the participants, here or elsewhere. In Book V, chapter 14, Crinito tells us that those in the *Orti Oricellari* recently read the history (probably Dio Cassius') of the Roman Emperor Commodus Antoninus, infamous for his crimes.¹¹⁶ Lastly, we learn that the group discussed Volcatius Sedigitis' canon of Latin authors.¹¹⁷ The *De honesta disciplina* explicitly names Giovanni Corsi as an authority on

¹¹⁴ Felix Gilbert, "Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari: A Study on the Origin of Modern Political Thought," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 (1949), esp. 114-119.

¹¹⁵ Pietro Crinito, *De honesta disciplina*, ed. C. Angeleri (Rome: Fratelli Bocca, 1955), II, 14, 98-9: "In hortis Oricellariis cum nuper aliquot egregie docti homines convenissent, ubi de honestis literis optimisque disciplinis saepe et copiose agitur, forte incidit mentio de veterum institutis, de regenda civitate, ac de Venetum clarissimo atque summo imperio."

¹¹⁶ Crinito, *De honesta*, V, 14, 156: "Legebatur nuper in Hortis Oricellariis historia de Commodo Antonino imperatore, qui inter alia scelera atque flagitia, ut traditur, etiam mythriaca sacra homicidio polluit."

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, XI, 12, 256: "Itaque nuper in Hortis Oricellariis inter alia complura quaesitum est de Sedigito Volcatio deque eius iudicio, quod ab eo factum est de ingenio et ordine decem Comicorum, qui apud Latinos in pretio habiti sunt, item de poeticis vocabulis et veterum audacia in verbis inveniendis, excogitandis atque componendis, cuiusmodi fuerunt M. Plautus, Cn. Naevius, P. Laberius, qui paulo durior atque audacior habitus est, M. Cato, Q. Ennius, Fabius Pictor et alii eiusdem aetatis non ignobiles auctores." Volcatius Sedigitis was a second century literary critic. See Gian Biagio Conte, *Latin Literature: A History* 2 ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 573.

classical antiquity.¹¹⁸ According to Crinito, the conversation in the *Orti Oricellari* ran the gamut from contemporary politics and political theory to antiquarian interests - both moral and linguistic. As we shall see, the individual participants were not only politicians and ambassadors but also translators and antiquarians. Crinito died in 1505, so these discussions must have occurred prior to that date.

Giovan-Battista Gelli provides us with the most complete list of participants in his

Ragionamento intorno alla lingua:

As in the times of your childhood when Bernardo Rucellai, Francesco da Diacceto, Giovanni Canacci, Giovanni Corsi, Piero Martelli, Francesco Vettori and other men of letters would then assemble in the gardens of the Rucellai where you, whenever you could penetrate there in any manner, you listened to them talking among themselves with such reverence and attention that it was as if you sought after the oracles themselves. And it reminds me even more when I hear you say that you went so willingly, to hear the ambassadors who came there to deliver their speeches, since it was then customary for them to speak there first in a public fashion.¹¹⁹

Gelli's reference to the ambassadors demonstrates that political topics were often on the menu for discussion just as his inclusion of the Orti participants as models worthy of emulation in a treatise on language and literature affirms their interest in linguistics and literary concerns.

Lastly, the correspondence of the participants sheds further light on the composition of and topics discussed at these meetings. For example, a letter from

¹¹⁸ Crinito, *De honesta*, XI, 12, 256: "Numquam videor magis in otio et honestis litteris versari quam eo tempore, quo cum Joanne Corseo et Lacetio Nigro de optimis studiis atque omni antiquitate disseritur."

¹¹⁹ Giovan-Battista Gelli, "Ragionamento infra M. Cosimo Bartoil e Giovan Batista Gelli sopra le difficoltà del mettere in regole la nostra lingua," in *Opere*, ed. Delmo Maestri (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1976), 453: "come ne'tempi de la tua fanciulleza erano Bernardo Rucellai, Francesco da Diacceto, Giovanni Canacci, Giovanni Corsi, Piero Martelli, Francesco Vettori e altri litterati che allora si ragunavano a l'orto de' Rucellai, dove tu, quando potevi tal volta penetrare in maniera alcuna, stavi con quella reverenza e attenzione a udirli parlare tra loro, che si ricerca proprio a gli oracoli. E di più mi ricorda ancora averti sentito dire che andavi sì volentieri, quando ci venivano ambasciatori, a urdirli fare l'orazioni, essendo in que'tempi usanza che parlassino la prima volta pubblicamente."

Bernardo Rucellai to Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, written in Marseilles, asks Diacceto for his opinion on a part of his *De bello italico* - a report on the battle of Taro which he sent to his son, Palla.¹²⁰ The letters written to Bernardo Rucellai and Bartolomeo della Fonte demonstrate a strong bond of patronage, friendship and scholarly respect between the two humanists.¹²¹ Although their correspondence does not explicitly address the nature of the meetings, it nevertheless demonstrates the warm, collaborative social environment that was fostered in the gardens. These letters and prefaces will feature prominently in the individual biographies of the participants.

Member	Source
Giovanni Canacci	Gelli's <i>Ragionamento</i>
Giovanni Corsi	Crinito's <i>De honesta disciplina</i> , Gelli's <i>Ragionamento</i>
Pietro Crinito	Crinito's "Ad Faustum: De sylva Oricellaria," and <i>De honesta disciplina</i>
Francesco da Diacceto	Crinito's <i>De honesta disciplina</i> and Gelli's <i>Ragionamento</i>
Bartolommeo della Fonte	Della Fonte's correspondence
Piero Martelli	Gelli's <i>Ragionamento</i>
Cosimo Pazzi	Corsi's forewords
Bindaccio Ricasoli	Corsi's forewords
Bernardo Rucellai	Crinito's "Ad Faustum" and <i>De honesta disciplina</i> ; della Fonte's

¹²⁰ P. Burmannus (ed.), *Sylloges Epistolarum a Viris Illustribus Scriptarum*, II (Leiden: 1727), 197-9.

¹²¹ Bartolomeo Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, ed. Alessandro Dalelioni, trans. Martin Davies (Cambridge, MA.: I Tatti, 2011), II, 5; III, 6; III, 12.

	correspondence; Gelli's <i>Ragionamento</i> , Nerli
Francesco Vettori	Gelli's <i>Ragionamento</i>

Table 1: Membership of the Rucellai Group in the Earlier Phase¹²²

Member	Source
Roberto Acciaiuoli	Paolo Giovio
Jacopo Alamanni	Suggested by Brucioli
Ludovico di Piero Alamanni	Machiavelli's correspondence
Luigi di Piero Alamanni	Brucioli, Gelli's <i>Ragionamento</i> , Machiavelli's <i>Arte della Guerra</i> and his correspondence, Nardi, Nerli and Varchi.
Luigi di Tommaso Alamanni	Brucioli, Nardi and Nerli
Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi	Machiavelli's correspondence
Antonio Brucioli	Brucioli, Nardi and Nerli
Zanobi Buondelmonti	Brucioli, Gelli's <i>Ragionamento</i> , Machiavelli's <i>Arte della Guerra</i> and his correspondence, Nardi, Nerli and Varchi.
Giovanni Corsi	Paolo Giovio
Fabrizio Colonna	Machiavelli's <i>Arte della Guerra</i>
Francesco da Diacceto 'il Nero'	Nardi

¹²² Anthony M. Cummings includes two other figures in his own tabulation of the members of the first period of garden gatherings in *Maecenas and the Madrigalist*: Giovan Battista Gelli and Dante Popoleschi. Gelli was born in 1498 and was thus too young to have actively participated in the meetings of the first decade of the sixteenth century. The evidence for Dante Popoleschi's participation in the gardens is the opening to a letter from Bartolomeo della Fonte to Bernardo Rucellai that describes a conversation that Dante Popoleschi had with della Fonte concerning a conversation he had had with Pontano in Naples. The letter is dated 1 March 1513 from Florence: "Dantes Populeschus tuo nomine ad me pertulit sermonem cum Pontano Neapoli habitum, quem maxime sequeris auctorem in historia Gallica describenda" (Fonte, *Letters to Friends*, III, 11, 173-176). Popoleschi translated Caesar's *Gallic Wars* into the Florentine vernacular in 1518. I am not convinced that he attended the *Orti* gatherings even if he was a common friend of two of the participants. See Anthony Cummings, *The Maecenas and the Madrigalist: Patrons, Patronage and the Origins of the Italian Madrigal* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2004), 24-5.

Francesco da Diacceto ‘il Pagonazzo’	Nardi, Paolo Giovio
Jacopo da Diacceto	Brucioli, Machiavelli’s correspondence, Nardi and Nerli
Francesco Guidetti	Brucioli, Gelli’s <i>Ragionamento</i> and Machiavelli’s correspondence
Janus Lascaris	Brucioli and Gelli’s <i>I Caprici del Bottaio</i>
Piero Martelli	Paolo Giovio
Niccolò Machiavelli	Machiavelli’s correspondence and <i>Arte della Guerra</i> and the dedications to his <i>Discorsi</i> and <i>Vita Castruccio Castracani</i> , Nardi, Nerli and Varchi
Jacopo Nardi	Brucioli and Machiavelli’s correspondence
Filippo de’ Nerli	Machiavelli’s correspondence and Nerli
Batista della Palla	Brucioli, Machiavelli’s <i>Arte della Guerra</i> and his correspondence, and Nerli
Pierfrancesco Portinari	Machiavelli’s correspondence
Giovanni and Palla Rucellai	Paolo Giovio
Cosimo Rucellai ‘Cosimino’	Brucioli, Gelli’s <i>Ragionamento</i> , Machiavelli’s <i>Arte della Guerra</i> and his correspondence, Nardi, Nerli and Varchi
Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi	Dedication to Machiavelli’s <i>Arte della Guerra</i>
Giangiorgio Trissino	Brucioli, Gelli’s <i>Ragionamento</i> and Varchi
Alessandro de’ Pazzi (?)	Machiavelli’s correspondence
Benedetto Varchi (?)	Varchi
Francesco Vettori	Paolo Giovio

Table 2: Membership of the Rucellai Group in the Later Phase¹²³

Gilbert continued his exploration of the historical writing that took place under the auspices of Bernardo Rucellai's patronage in *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*. He, like

¹²³ This table is also based on one found in Cummings, *Maecenas and the Madrigal*, 24-5, but with my own addition of Paolo Giovio as a source text.

Nicolai Rubinstein, sees the *Orti* gatherings as an originary site for the development of a myth of Lorenzo as an enlightened ruler and the key player in the Italian “balance of power.”¹²⁴ Until James Hankins' “The Myth of the Platonic Academy of Florence,” overturned the claim that Ficino's *Academia Platonica* was a formal meeting group, most of the scholarship on the *Orti Oricellari* was focused on its continuation of what was once understood to be an institutional environment.¹²⁵ There has been considerable work on individual members of the *Orti* group, such as Guglielmo Pellegrini's *L'umanista Bernardo Rucellai e le sue opere storiche*,¹²⁶ William McCuaig's brief article on “Bernardo Rucellai and Sallust,”¹²⁷ and two articles by Paul Oskar Kristeller on Diacceto and Neo-Platonism and the career of Giovanni Corsi.¹²⁸ Bernardo Rucellai's *De bello italico commentarius* has been made more accessible to scholars thanks to the recent publication of a critical edition with facing translation by Donatella Coppini.¹²⁹ Ernesto Travi has investigated the influence of the *Orti Oricellari* and Machiavelli on the prolific Renaissance humanist, Paolo Giovio.¹³⁰ The most recent investigation into the *Orti Oricellari* as a space of patronage is Anthony M. Cumming's *Maecenas and the*

¹²⁴ Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, 112-3; Nicolai Rubinstein, “Formation of the Posthumous Image of Lorenzo de' Medici,” in *Oxford, China and Italy: Writings in Honour of Sir Harold Acton on his Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Edward Chaney and Neil Ritchie (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), esp. 94-97.

¹²⁵ See for example, Rudolf von Albertini, *Das florentinische Staatsbewusstsein* (Bern: Francke, 1955), 74-90. For a summary of the debate over the Platonic Academy, see Christopher S. Celenza, “The revival of Platonic philosophy,” *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. J. Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 83.

¹²⁶ Guglielmo Pellegrini, *L'umanista Bernardo Rucellai e le sue opere storiche* (Livorno: Raffaello Giusti, 1920).

¹²⁷ William McCuaig, “Bernardo Rucellai and Sallust,” *Rinascimento* 22 (1982): 75-99.

¹²⁸ P. O. Kristeller, “Francesco da Diacceto and Florentine Platonism in the sixteenth century,” and “Un uomo di stato e humanista fiorentino: Giovanni Corsi,” in *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1956): 287-336; 175-190; Christopher S. Celenza, “Francesco Cattani da Diacceto's ‘De pulchro,’ II.4, and the Practice of Renaissance Platonism,” *Academia* 9 (2007): 87-98.

¹²⁹ Bernardo Rucellai, *De bello italico: La guerra d'Italia*, ed. Donatella Coppini (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2011).

¹³⁰ Ernesto Travi, “Giovio, gli Orti Oricellari e Machiavelli,” *Testo* 5 (1983): 52-61.

Madrigalist, which explores the role of private institutions in the development of the Italian madrigal of the *cinquecento*. The *Orti Oricellari* is the site where the earliest madrigalists, Layolle, Pisano and Verdelot, engaged with the Rucellai group's program of restituting *trecento* literary values and practices and the ongoing debate regarding the respective merits of the vernacular and Latin poetry: the *questione della lingua*.¹³¹ Cummings' excellent work on the second phase of the Orti gatherings serves as a methodological model for this dissertation.

Each of the participants would have brought his own, unique experiences and interests to bear on topics of discussion in the *Orti Oricellari* where along with literary concerns, policy, both domestic and foreign, is of importance. As the historical writings of Bartolommeo della Fonte and Bernardo Rucellai are the subjects of individual chapters in this dissertation, we will set aside their biographies for now and provide a brief overview of the careers and concerns of those members who did not write historical texts we will examine in order to better understand the diverse makeup of the context out of which these historical texts were composed.

Giovanni Canacci (c. 1470 – c. 1520)

Giovanni Canacci, son of Antonio Canacci, was an influential politician in Florence during the late fifteenth century renowned for his moral integrity. The family was a mercantile one that had met with success during the second half of the Quattrocento and acquired a building to construct the Palazzo Cannaci at Parte Guelfa, 3

¹³¹ Anthony Cummings, *The Maecenas and the Madrigalist*, 15-78.

in 1455.¹³² Giovanni Canacci held the office of prior twice, first from January to February of 1491 and again from May-June 1497. Furthermore, he was one of the Ten of Liberty, the council that ran the militia in a time of war, in 1498 and one of the twelve *Buonomini* who condemned Savonarola. He was one of the many patricians who was invited to attend Soderini's 1502 banquet and was godfather to Francesco Guicciardini.¹³³ He did not approve of rule by the rich and condemned it as sterile and injurious to the lower classes, if we can trust a speech attributed to him in Crinito's *De honesta disciplina*:

It is a disgrace, he said, when in a good and rightly constituted city, wicked pleasures take pride of place over good customs. But this is most disgraceful of all: when men who are wise and who excel in giving the best counsel busy themselves with wealth and – just as if a conspiracy had taken place – are driven away [from good government]. Indeed, immoderate and excessive wealth in a free city bears first luxury and desire, thence ambition and evil things. ... In our city, if perhaps we wish to know a man, it is this that we ask first: how much he has; how wealthy he is; by how much wealth and treasure he stands out from the others. And we judge that no one possesses prudence, that no one stands out with respect to his talent, except for those men who vaunt themselves as more abundant and more famous by means of great treasuries and vainglorious wealth.¹³⁴

One cannot help but hear something of a criticism of the ostentatious expenditures (like the construction of the *Orti Oricellari*) incurred by the Rucellai, Pazzi and de' Medici over the course of the fifteenth century. Crinito refers to Canacci again as a moral

¹³² On the Canacci palace and its restoration, see Ginori Lisci, *The Palazzo of Florence*, 161-2; Claudio Paolini, "Scheda Palazzo Canacci," *Repertorio delle Architetture Civili di Firenze*. <http://www.palazzospinelli.org/architetture/stampa.asp?ID=708> [accessed 6 June 2013].

¹³³ Humfrey C. Butters, "Piero Soderini and the Golden Age," *Italian Studies* 33:1 (1978), 71; M. E. Cozena, *Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary of the Italian Humanists and of the World of Classical Scholarship in Italy, 1300-1800*, I (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1962), 816.

¹³⁴ Crinito, *De honesta*, XXV, 9, 477-8: Turpe est – inquit – cum in proba civitate beneque instituta magis conceditur improbis voluptatibus, quam bonis disciplinis. Sed illud in primis turpissimum, cum viri sapientes, et qui optimis consiliis praestant, a divitibus occupantur, ac velut facta conspiratione reiiciuntur. Nam ingentes nimiaeque divitiae in libera civitate luxum primum et libidinem, deinde ambitionem atque scelera pariunt. ... Sed in civitate – inquit – nostra, si quem forte volumus cognosse, primum hoc rogamus, quantum habet, quam locuples est, quantis opibus ac divitiis excellit, neminemque existimamus habere prudentiam aut praestare ingenio, praeter hos homines, qui magnis largitionibus et ambitiosis sumptibus sese ampliores clarioresque demonstrant.

authority when he describes him as “a man no less steadfast of outstanding spirit than singular with respect to the soundness of life” who argues for the value of Senecan philosophy for Christians.¹³⁵

Giovanni Corsi tells us in his *Vita Marsilii Ficini* that Giovanni Canacci, as well as Bernardo Rucellai and Bindaccio Ricasoli, met Ficino almost daily "to discuss serious matters of philosophy, and sometimes he would jest and converse with them..¹³⁶ Canacci is described as having “a strictness of morals, weighty talk, a wonderful sophistication and the sharpest wit. In his way of life, he recalled the mores of those Cincinnatis and ancient Sejanus”¹³⁷ Ficino sent both Canacci and Ricasoli copies of his controversial book *De vita libri tres* on 22 July 1492.¹³⁸

Francesco Cattani di Diacceto (16 Nov 1466 – 10 April 1522)

Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, called Diacceto or *Pagonazzo* was born into an illustrious patrician family -- so much so that Bartolommeo della Fonte, a participant in the *Orti* gatherings, wrote a biography of his grandfather, Paolo.¹³⁹ His father, Zanobi da Diacceto, however, died while Francesco was still a young man and the family was left in financial instability. He married Lucrezia Capponi and they had seven sons and six daughters. Diacceto was studying in Pisa in 1491 along with the the future Leo X who, along with Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, was a frequent dedicatee of his work. The relationship between Diacceto and the Medici was such that he was asked to deliver a

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* I, 16, p. 778: “homo non minori constantia animi insignis quam egregia vitae sinceritate”

¹³⁶ Giovanni Corsi, *Vita M. Ficini per Joannem Cursium* in *Marsile Ficini* by Raymond Marcel (Paris: Société d'Édition “Les Belles Lettres,” 1958), 687.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 688.

¹³⁸ Marsilio Ficino, *Supplementum Ficianum: Marcilii Ficini florentini philosophi platonici opuscula inedita et dispersa*, ed. Paul Oskar Kristeller, 1 (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1937), LXXXIV-LXXXV.

¹³⁹ Kristeller, “Francesco da Diacceto,” 296.

funeral oration for Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino in 1519. Diacceto did more than just praise the Medici - he was actively involved in their governance of Florence. On 4 July 1498, he was elected as one of the eight men to scrutinize the council. He appears among the *Otto di Guardia*, a council of eight in charge of criminal justice, on May 1, 1510, and among the *Capitanei* of the Guelf Party, whose powers had recently been expanded, on 11 April 1514 to permit direct appointment of the castellans of San Clemente at Arezzo, of the citadel of Volterra and of Verrucola in September 1, 1515.¹⁴⁰ He served as an ambassador of the Medici government to the Emperor on 9 November 1512. In 1520, he appears as a *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia*, the magistrate tasked with overseeing the *Priores* and maintaining the city's militia, for the months of January and February.¹⁴¹

Diacceto's influence in Florentine affairs was even wider than his busy career might suggest. He was a professor of moral philosophy at the University of Pisa (in its Florence branch) from 1502 onwards and actively lectured on Aristotle's *Physics* and *De Anima*, among other subjects from 1503-1504 and from 1516-1521.¹⁴² His pedagogical pursuits were not limited to an institutional setting. Diacceto was the teacher of Bernardo Rucellai's three sons: Giovanni, Palla and Piero.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Florence, Archivio di Stato, *Tratte*, v. 84 f. 84.; Florence, Archivio di Stato, *Tratte*, v. 84, f. 6; Butters, *Governors and Government*, 243.

¹⁴¹ Kristeller, "Francesco da Diacceto," 303.

¹⁴² He was paid f.200 for November 1503 on at Studio pisano Rotulus as "ad philosophiam." Armando F. Verde, *Lo studio fiorentino, 1473-1503: ricerche e documenti* (Florence: Istituto nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento, 1973), pg. 383 or c.180v. Paid for « ad philosophiam moralem » in 1502.

¹⁴³ Kristeller, "Francesco da Diacceto," 322.

Diacceto and Ficino had a close relationship, and the famous Neo-Platonist left his disciple copies of his books of Plato in his will.¹⁴⁴ Although he is frequently described as Ficino's greatest pupil and staunchest defender, his works sought to reconcile Aristotle and Plato in a way that surpassed the aims of Ficino.¹⁴⁵

The men who participated in the *Orti* gatherings sought his advice in a number of different areas. Bernardo Rucellai asked for his view regarding part of the manuscript that would become the *De bello italico* while he was in Marseilles.¹⁴⁶ His *Opera Omnia*, published posthumously includes a number of letters between Diacceto and the *Orti* group. Before his departure for Marseilles, Diacceto sent Bernardo Rucellai a letter concerning a passage of Boethius.¹⁴⁷ He wrote to Giovanna Rucellai explaining the myths of Caelus, Saturn and Jupiter.¹⁴⁸ He proposed Plato's "great year" (the length of the worldly cycle) as 12,000 years in a letter to Bindaccio Ricasoli and wrote to Bernardo Rucellai proposing that true philosophy is the moral conduct of life.¹⁴⁹ Both Francesco Vettori and Ficino speak of him with great respect.¹⁵⁰ Kristeller has argued convincingly in an article published in 1956 that his philosophy was influential beyond his immediate circle by demonstrating its effect on Michelangelo.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁴ Firenze, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Notarile, Vol. M239, f. 68 published in Kristeller, *Supplementum Ficianum*, 2, 194-201. On the relationship between Diacceto and Ficino, see Corsi, *Vita Marsilii Ficini*, 688.

¹⁴⁵ For example, see Paolo Giovio, *Opera*, ed. Como Historical Society (Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 1957), 9, 292: "Franciscus Aiacetus, platonicae sectae Philosophus, uti in Academia tum morte Marsilii Ficini admodum deserta, singularis."

¹⁴⁶ Burmannus, *Sylloges*, II, 197-9.

¹⁴⁷ Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, *Opera Omnia* (Basel: Petri et Perna, 1563), 324-9.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 337-341.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 341-44; 344.

¹⁵⁰ A. Foa, "Cattani da Diacceto, Francesco" in *Dizionario biografico italiano*, (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1960--), 22: 507-511.

¹⁵¹ Kristeller, "Francesco da Diacceto," 325-6.

Diacceto's work was never printed during his lifetime, but circulated in manuscript form among the lettered community of Florence. He dedicated his *De amore*, a treaty on metaphysics, the nature of the soul, intelligence and the changing conditions of material things, to Bindaccio Ricasoli.¹⁵² He translated the *De amore* into Italian himself and dedicated that version to Piero Rucellai who died in 1511.¹⁵³ His *Panegyricus in amorem* was dedicated to Giovanni Corsi and Palla Rucellai sometime before 1508 in which he calls the two men "his dearest friends."¹⁵⁴ Giovanni Corsi returned the favour by dedicating his translation of Plutarch to him.¹⁵⁵ Diacceto's other works include *Epistolae philosophicae*; *Discorso sopra la supersizione dell'arte magica*; *Della cognizione di Dio e di se stesso*, epigrams, lectures, letters, poems.¹⁵⁶

Diacceto died on 10 April 1522, just before the discovery of an anti-Medici plot among his students at the *Accademia*. His biography has come down to us from a Latin biography by Benedetto Varchi published in 1561.¹⁵⁷ Varchi claimed to have spoken to Diacceto's grandson, Francesco the younger and bishop of Fiesole from 1570 until his death in 1595, and other companions as sources. He was considered an authority on moral philosophy and a dear friend by many members of the *Orti* group and was actively involved in Florentine political affairs both locally and abroad.

¹⁵²Diacceto, *Opera Omnia*, 90.

¹⁵³ Kristeller, "Francesco da Diacceto," 308-9.

¹⁵⁴Diacceto, *Opera Omnia*, 130. For an English translation of the *Panegyrics* see Luc Deitz (ed.), "Francesco Cattani da Diacceto," in *Cambridge Translations of Renaissance Philosophical Texts*, ed. Jill Kraye, 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 156-165.

¹⁵⁵ A. Foa, "Cattani da Diacceto, Francesco," *Dizionario biografico italiano*, 22:508.

¹⁵⁶ Cosenza, *Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary*, II, 943-945.

¹⁵⁷ Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, *I Tre Libri d'Amore di M. Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, filosofo et gentil'huomo fiorentino, con un Panegerico all'Amore; et con la Vita del detto autore*, ed. Benedetto Varchi (Venezia: Gabriel Giolito, 1561).

Pietro del Riccio Baldi (22 May 1477 – 5 July 1507)

Piero del Riccio Baldi, called Crinito, was the only member of the *Orti* group who was not of a patrician family. He was the fifth of nine brothers born to Bartolomeo and Lisa di Beltramone Tosinighi and under the tutelage of Paolo Sassi di Ronciglione, he showed an early talent for classics and philology.¹⁵⁸ A manuscript of Sidonius Apollinaris from 1489 in the Biblioteca Laurenziana demonstrates his exposure to Greek even at the very young age of fourteen.¹⁵⁹ His precocity attracted the attention of the famous men of letters of the age.¹⁶⁰ In 1491, he began to attend the *studio fiorentino* and attended many of Ficino's lectures. He and Angelo Poliziano worked collaboratively during the early 1490s and upon the latter's death in 1494, Crinito published an edition of the philologist's work with Aldo Manutius.¹⁶¹ He took up his teacher's role at the *Studio Fiorentino*.

Unlike the other participants in the *Orti* gatherings, Crinito did not have ambassadorial experience. He was nevertheless well-travelled. He spent 1495 to 1496 in Naples and established a relationship with Pontano there. He then went to Rome and interacted with Tommaso Fosco, Manilio Rosso and Pomponio Leto. During a stay in Venice he encountered Ermolao Barbaro and Bartolomeo Soderini. In the early sixteenth-century, he returned to Florence.¹⁶² Crinito's library, admirably reconstructed by Michaelangiola Marchiari, documents an avid interest in historical and biographical texts: He owned copies of Herodotus (translated by Poliziano), Suetonius, Annio da

¹⁵⁸ R. Ricciardi, "Del Riccio Baldi, Pietro," *Dizionario biografico italiano*. 38: 505. Paolo Sassi di Ronciglione was also Niccolò Machiavelli's teacher. See Francesco Bausi, *Machiavelli* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2005), 29.

¹⁵⁹ Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS Plut. 90.

¹⁶⁰ Carlo Angelieri, introduction to *De honesta disciplina*, by Pietro Crinito, 7-8.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* 13.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 15.

Viterbo's *Antiquitates*, Livy, both Sallust's *Jurguthan Wars* and *Catiline Conspiracy* and Bartolommeo della Fonte's *Orations* and *Life of Perseus*.¹⁶³

The vast majority of Crinito's corpus is written in Latin. The *De honesta disciplina*, likely the prepatory notes for his lectures on critical philology, was published in 1504 and received with immediate acclaim -- Marullo described him as a second Gellius.¹⁶⁴ Like his scholarly forebears, Lorenzo Valla and Angelo Poliziano, Crinito gave careful consideration to style and its role in historical criticism. He also tried to reconstruct classical Roman law.¹⁶⁵ In 1505, he published the *De poetis Latinis*, dedicated to Cosimo Pazzi, the bishop of Arezzo and another member of the *Orti* group. Its five volumes are the first example of Italian literary criticism devoted entirely to Latin authors and that includes fifteenth-century writers. It is strikingly comprehensive and includes an entry for every known ancient Latin poet.¹⁶⁶ It was to be followed by a second volume, entitled *Libri de historicis ac rhetoribus Latinis*, that we must surmise from the title would have dealt with historians and orators.¹⁶⁷ Another lost work, the *De Urbibus*, was consciously modelled on Bernardo Rucellai's antiquarian tract *De Urbe Roma*, and demonstrates that Crinito was concerned with the historical concerns writ large and not

¹⁶³ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, C.4.35^b, cc.aa3r-ii4v; Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, E.2.12, cc.a2-T1r; Cambridge (MA), Harvard College Library, Houghton Library, 1473; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm807 (Vict.130), ff. 90-98;; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2 Inc.c.a. 467²; Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ed. Rare 538; Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, R.A.447². See Michaelangiola Marchiari, *La Biblioteca di Pietro Crinito: Manoscritti e libri a stampa della raccolta* (Porto: Fédération internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 2013).

¹⁶⁴ Angeleri, introduction to *De honesta*, 30.

¹⁶⁵ Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship*, 49.

¹⁶⁶ Petrus Crinitus, *De poetis Latinis* (Florence: Giunta, 1505). See Christopher S. Celenza, "Petrus Crinitus and Ancient Latin Poetry," in *Essays in Renaissance Thought and Letters: In Honor of John Monfasani*, ed. A. K. Frazier and P. Nold (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 36-52.

¹⁶⁷ Paolo Giovio, *Elogia Virorum Literis Illustrium*, ed. Renzo Meregazzi (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1972), LXXV, 99.

merely philology.¹⁶⁸ Christopher S. Celenza has recently argued for a strong Suetonian bent in Crinito's corpus that demonstrates the influence of miscellanistic historical writing on his thought.¹⁶⁹

Crinito died, probably of consumption, at the young age of 32 on 5 July 1507. Paolo Giovio tells us that he died after a party held at Piero Martelli's villa at Sciandino.¹⁷⁰ He never held a political office. His devotion to Angelo Poliziano lies in stark contrast with the adversarial relationship with Bartolomeo della Fonte and the philologist - conversations must have been interesting. It is Crinito's *De honesta disciplina* that provides us with the best clues as to the topics of discussion at the *Orti* gatherings.

Giovanni di Bardo Corsi (1472-1547)

Giovanni di Bardo Corsi is most famous for his *Vita Ficini* published in 1506 -- the first biography of the famous neo-Platonist who had died 1499. He dedicated this text to Ficino's close friend and his frequent correspondent, Bindaccio Ricasoli. Corsi's corpus, though small, shows more than a passing interest in biographical writing. He composed four Latin translations of Plutarch from 1511 to 1513 and dedicated three of them to members of the *Orti Oricellari* group: the first to Palla Rucellai (Bernardo's son), the third to Francesco Vettori, and the fourth to Francesco da Diaccetto -- who returned the favour by dedicating his *Panegyricus in amore* to Corsi and Palla Rucellai. Paolo Giovio

¹⁶⁸ Angeleri, introduction to *De honesta*, 18.

¹⁶⁹ Celenza, "Petrus Crinitus and Ancient Latin Poetry," 38-39.

¹⁷⁰ Paolo Giovio, *Elogia Virorum Literis Illustrium*, ed. Renzo Meregazzi (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1972), LV, 83.

praises Corsi for this translation of the Greek biographer:¹⁷¹ He published an edition of Pontano's *De prudentia* in 1508 from an autograph copy that he had brought back to Florence from Naples after a two-year stay there from 1501 to 1503 during which he established a friendly relationship with the eminent Neapolitan humanist himself.¹⁷² In a letter addressed to Cosimo de' Pazzi, he describes his time spent in Naples and then goes on to describe himself as an "*alumnum*" (pupil) of Bernardo Rucellai.¹⁷³ The close relationship between the Rucellai family and Giovanni Corsi is attested to by the inclusion of two letters written by Palla Rucellai in Corsi's papers.¹⁷⁴ The same collection includes a letter from Piero Martelli, another *Orti Oricellarii* participant, to the *Dieci di balia*.

Like his teacher, Giovanni Corsi withdrew from political life during the Soderini regime. In the same chapter of the *Vita Ficini* in which he recounts Bernardo Rucellai's reasons for leaving Italy for France, he criticizes the Florentine government during the French campaign in Italy:

In our city stupidity and ignorance dominated learning and the good arts, avarice dominated liberty, ambition and luxury dominated modesty and restraint. Indeed, it was such that altogether no one was concerned with the republic or the laws but with altogether wantonness such that anyone great was assailed by the common people as a laughingstock.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Giovio, *Opera* 9, 292: "qui unum maxime Plutarchum uti varium ac ac indefessum scriptorem admirabatur, cuius ipse aureolos quosdam libellos latinitate donavisset."

¹⁷² Crinito, *De honesta*, X, 12.

¹⁷³ Florence, Archivio Corsi Salviati, 57, f. 1: "Neapoli quum essem, quo visendi pariter atque ociandi, ut aiunt, gratia secesseram, fractis non tum penitus Gallorum rebus, nihil mihi erat potius, quam ut Ioannem Pontanum convenirem, virum nempe cum primis tibus amicissimum, atque, ut aetate iam consumptum, ita in omnibus, quod ipse scis, bonarum artium disciplinis, nec minus in Republica undequaque solertissimum."

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Corsi, *Vita Marsilii Ficini*, IX, 684: "Quandoquidem in nostra civitate pro disciplinis, ac bonis artibus incitia, et ignorantia, pro libertate avaritia, pro modestia, et continentia, ambitio et luxuria dominantur;

Corsi's biography of Marsilio Ficino demonstrates the close connections between members of the *Orti* group and the famous neo-Platonist. He recounts that daily Ficino met with Bernardo Rucellai, Giovannina Canacci and Bindaccio Ricasoli, "certainly men of ancient integrity as well as erudition and such that ... the world held no more guileless souls."¹⁷⁶

Corsi was a staunch supporter of Medici rule and on 16 September 1512 was selected as a member of the *Balia* that reformed Florentine political institutions in the wake of the Medici return to power. Corsi had extensive diplomatic and political experience under the Medici, although he did not hold any official positions before that time. He served as ambassador to Spain twice, once from 1513 to 1515 and again from 1522 until 1525. He was resident in Rome as the ambassador to Paul III at the time of his death on 17 July 1547. When not abroad, Corsi was a frequent participant in Florentine governance: during merely the first decade of his active participation, he served as *capitano* of Pistoia in 1517, as Conservator of the Law (a magistracy instituted to review the sustainability of officeholders and to determine if any belonged to any illegal associations) in June 1518, as *Gonfaloniere di Giustizia* in January 1521 and as a member of the *Otto di Pratica* in May 1522. Corsi's life was one of intense involvement both in politics and in historical production. His most lasting contribution to scholarship was probably as an early reader of Francesco Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia*.¹⁷⁷

atque adeo ut nihil omnino cum Republica, nihil cum legibus agatur, sed pro libidine cuncta, ita ut optimus quisque a plebe per ludibrium oppugnetur."

¹⁷⁶ Corsi, *Vita Marsilii Ficini*, XX, 687: "viri quidem priscae integritatis, atque eruditionis, et quales (ut Poeta inquit) nec animo candidiores terra tulit."

¹⁷⁷ Cosenza, *Dictionary of the Italian Humanists*, II, 1162.

Piero di Braccio Martelli

Piero di Braccio Martelli was a member of a distinguished Florentine patrician family well accustomed to rule.¹⁷⁸ His father was a close friend to the two most famous Florentine men-of-letters of their time, Marsilio Ficino and the philologist Poliziano. He held numerous government positions both under the Medici and under Soderini's government, for which he also served as ambassador.¹⁷⁹ We know relatively little about Piero di Braccio himself other than that he was a patron of the arts: it was at his house, where the sculptor Gian Francesco Rustici was also staying, that Leonardo da Vinci wrote notes for his physics in 1508.¹⁸⁰ He was a mathematician, skilled in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, whose works, we learn from Pierio Valeriano's 1522 dialogue *On the Ill Fortune of Learned Men*, were never completed due to poor health:

The Florentine Pietro Martelli was highly regarded among the learned men of his generation. ... He was well read in every discipline and wrote an elegant letter, as well as witty and accomplished epigrams. But tormented by the most undeserved illness involving virtually his whole body, with his joints miserably affected, distressed by paralysis, the inability to digest food, and a thousand other ailments, he lay ill for a very long time. ... But his son Braccio had saved from destruction four books of the most precise exposition on mathematical subjects that had been brought to completion even according to the testimony of the author himself.¹⁸¹

He married Lucrezia Pazzi, the daughter of Guglielmo Pazzi and Bianca de' Medici and thus was tied by marriage to two other great Florentine families. Furthermore, Cosimo de'

¹⁷⁸ On the Martelli and the de' Medici, see Lauro Martines, "La famiglia Martelli," *Archivio Storico Italiano* (1959): 29-43.

¹⁷⁹ There is a letter from Piero Martelli to the Dieci di Balia concerning Guicciardini's 1512 embassy to Spain in Corsi's papers. See Florence, Archivio Corsi Salvati, Filza 57, f. 1.

¹⁸⁰ Londo, British Museum Arundel MS 263 cited in Irma A. Richter, *Selections from Leonardo Da Vinci's Notebooks* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1966), 365. The manuscript is in Da Vinci's characteristic left-handed mirror writing and I have been unable to decipher it myself. On the manuscript, see Carlo Pedretti, *Il Codice Arundel 263 nella British Library* (Firenze: Giunti, 1998).

¹⁸¹ Pierio Valeriano, *On the Ill Fortune of Learned Men: A Renaissance Humanist and His World*, trans. Julia Haig Gaisser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999): 2:35, 202.

Pazzi, another member of the *Orti Oricellari*, was his brother-in-law. Piero di Braccio and Lucrezia had a two sons. His eldest, Braccio di Piero, was born in 1501 and attended the Council of Trent as bishop of Fiesole. His son Pandolfo di Piero, born in 1504, continued the patrilineal line and begot the Florentine condottieri Antonio di Pandolfo Martelli.¹⁸²

Cosimo di Guglielmo Pazzi

The *Orti Oricellari* was not merely a meeting place for learned laymen. Cosimo Pazzi (1466-1513), bishop of Arezzo and archbishop of Florence from 1508 until his death in 1513, was an active participant. Cosimo was the son of Bianca de' Medici, and thus Lorenzo de' Medici's nephew and Piero de' Medici's cousin.¹⁸³ Although the Pazzi family had suffered financial repercussions as a result of the failed conspiracy to murder Lorenzo de' Medici and his brother, the marriage between Bianca and Guglielmo Pazzi brought this conflict to a resolution. Cosimo was affiliated with two of the wealthiest Florentine families and the nephew of Pope Leo X. His embroilment in Florentine politics caused Ferdinand of Aragon to reject him as a papal *nuncio* (under Julius II) in 1504.¹⁸⁴ His circle was one of the centres of resistance to Soderini's support for the Pisan council.¹⁸⁵ He published the first formal revision of synodal law since the *trecento* based on the episcopal constitutions of Antoninus of Florence in 1509.¹⁸⁶ His translations of

¹⁸² Piero di Braccio Martelli does not himself have an entry in the *Dizionario biografico italiano*, but both his father and his son do.

¹⁸³ Cosenza, *Dictionary of the Italian Humanists* III, 2530.

¹⁸⁴ J. Fernandez Alonso, "La legaciòn frustrada de Cosimo dei Pazzi," *Anthologica Annua* 11 (1963): 55-90.

¹⁸⁵ Parenti, *Storia Fiorentina*, ed. Andrea Matucci (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1994), II, IV, 171, f. 79.

¹⁸⁶ Richard C. Trexler, *Church and Community, 1200-1600: Studies in the History of Florence and New Spain* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1987), 441-452.

Maximus of Tyre were printed both in Basel and Paris in the sixteenth century.¹⁸⁷ Paolo Giovio attributes both a translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Ipygeniam* to him.¹⁸⁸ Both Giovanni Corsi and Pietro Crinito dedicated works to Cosimo Pazzi. Corsi, in the preface to his 1508 edition of Pontano's *De prudentia* submits his work to the judgment of Pazzi and Bernardo Rucellai, because they knew Pontano well, and he describes him in his *Vita Marsilii Ficini* as “a man with remarkable virtues eminent in everything as in the learning of instruction and practical knowledge” whose vast travels, like Homer’s Ulysses, kept far from his fatherland.¹⁸⁹ Piero Crinito addresses his *De poetis Latinis* to Cosimo Pazzi, bishop of Arezzo, to whom he says “you are a man with the greatest erudition and you excel in all the best studies.”¹⁹⁰ Like so many of the *Orti* participants, Cosimo Pazzi was both a man of distinguished learning and pedigree and an administrator with diplomatic experience.

Bindaccio di Andrea Ricasoli (c.1444-1524)

The Ricasoli family is one of the eldest patrician lines in Tuscany and traces its descent from a ninth-century Longobard heritage.¹⁹¹ They were actively involved in the building of two Florentine churches -- San Pier Maggiore and Santa Maria a Cavriglia.¹⁹²

Bindaccio was born in 1444 to Andrea Fortebraccio, lieutenant to the Perugian

¹⁸⁷ Maximus Tyrius and Cosimo Pazzi, *Philosophi Platonici Sermones* (Basel: Stephanus, 1559). Maximus Tyrius and Cosimo Pazzi, *Philosophi Platonici Sermones sive Disputationes XLI* (Paris: Henri Stephan, 1557).

¹⁸⁸ Paolo Giovio, *Elogia*, CXLVI, 142.

¹⁸⁹ Giovanni Corsi, dedicatory letter to *De prudentia*, by Giovanni Pontano (Florence: Giunta, 1508), unpaginated; Giovanni Corsi, *Vita Marsilii Ficini*, XXI, 688: “Vir quidem ingenti virtute, cum in omnibus tum disciplinarum eruditione, ac rerum peritia insignis; quandoquidem procul a patria diu cum fortruna luctatus, ut apud Homerum Ulisses, more hominum multorum vidit, multa quidem hic in accessu, plura tamen in recessu habuit.”

¹⁹⁰ Crinito, *De poetis latinis*, i: “qui summa eruditione optimisque disciplinis excellis.”

¹⁹¹ Luigi Passerini, *Genealogia e storia della famiglia Ricasoli* (Firenze: M. Cellini & C. Alla Galliliana, 1861), 1-6. See also Ginori Lisci, *The Palazzi of Florence*, 157.

¹⁹² Passerini, *Genealogia*, 9.

commander Braccio da Montone (Piero Martelli's father). Loyal to the Medici, he occupied a number of posts both before and after Soderini's government. In 1484 he was part of the *Consiglio Maggiore* that oversaw the scrutiny. The family's military expertise was called upon in 1495, when Bindaccio was sent to Chianti as *commissario* in order to defend the territory from Charles VIII's troops *en route* to Naples. Upon the Medici restoration in 1512, Bindaccio was one of the forty-eight men who sat on the *balìa* that reformed the government and in 1514 he took the office of vicar of Scarperia and il Mugello.¹⁹³

When not concerned with military and political affairs, Bindaccio Ricasoli was also a man of letters and a close friend of Bernardo Rucellai -- in the dedicatory letter to his *Vita Marsilii Ficini*, Corsi offers his biography of the neo-Platonist as a consolation for the sorrow incurred by the departure from Florence of Bernardo Rucellai. In that same text, Corsi describes Ricasoli as one of Ficino's disciples and as "soft and gentle of spirit, with the mildest of habits and the greatest courtesy."¹⁹⁴ Although there are no extant literary works, we know that he wrote poetry in praise of Carlo Marzuppinì and helped Ficino with the 1493 publication of his *De sole*.¹⁹⁵ He died on 31 July 1524 at the age of 80.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Cosenza, *Dictionary of the Italian Humanists* I, 605.

¹⁹⁴ Giovanni Corsi, *Vita Marsilii Ficini*, XX, 688.

¹⁹⁵ Kristeller, *Supplementum Ficianum* I, 73.

¹⁹⁶ Passerini, *Genealogia*, 155.

Francesco Vettori (1474-1539)

Francesco Vettori is the most well-known of the *Orti* participants because of his extensive correspondence with Machiavelli.¹⁹⁷ His father, Piero, was a successful military administrator and diplomat during the rule of Lorenzo *ilMagnifico*. His mother was Bernardo Rucellai's sister and his brother was married into the Strozzi family. He would have been a very young man during the first phase of the Rucellai meetings and although he was nearly twenty when Charles VIII invaded in 1494, we have no direct evidence of his thoughts on the political revolution in Florence during the late 1490s. He was appointed as *podestà* (chief magistrate) of Castiglione Aretino in 1506. The very next year he set out on a diplomatic mission to the Emperor Maximilian I along with the equally young and less aristocratically well-bred Machiavelli.¹⁹⁸

The main purpose of this important mission was to determine the emperor's military might and the likelihood of a serious invasion of Italy. Whereas Machiavelli returned to Florence in June 1508, Vettori continued his diplomatic mission by following the emperor to Antwerp until September. He fell ill in France on the way home and only returned to Florence in March 1509 where upon his arrival he was declared *priore* and sat on the *Signoria*. His sojourn as ambassador to Maximilian I furthered his public career and provided him with valuable experience of the empire that would be reflected in his

¹⁹⁷ John M. Najemy, *Between Friends: Discourses of Power and Desire in the Machiavelli-Vettori letters of 1513-1515* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). Vettori's status as Machiavelli's "sidekick" is evident in Louis Passy, *Un ami de Machiavel, François Vettori, sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1913-1914).

¹⁹⁸ Nicolai Rubinstein, "Firenze e il problema della politica imperiale in Italia al tempo di Massimiliano I," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 116 (1958), 5-35; Rosemary Devonshire Jones, *Francesco Vettori: Florentine Citizen and Medici Servant* (London: Althone Press, 1972), 10-33.

Sommario, a commentary on contemporary times covering 1511-1527.¹⁹⁹ While he corroborated with the Soderini government, in 1513 he and his brother Paolo threw their support behind the Medici restoration.

On New Year's Day of 1514, Francesco Vettori became a member of the newly reinstituted *Council of Seventy*, which had extensive executive, legislative and electoral powers in that it elected from its own ranks those officials responsible for foreign policy (*Otto di praticà*) and the public debt (*Dodici procuratori*).²⁰⁰ He served again as a Florentine ambassador, but this time in Rome at the court of Pope Julius II. He was present for the election of Leo X and became a trusted advisor to the Medici especially during the first few months of his reign. He appears to have remained relatively effective in his advocacy for Tuscan ecclesiastics, even as he was unsuccessful in securing official patronage for the Florentine political elite.²⁰¹

Vettori returned to Florence in 1515 with the young Lorenzo de' Medici (who would become the Duke of Urbino in 1516), with whom he had developed a close relationship while in Rome.²⁰² By June, the two were on the road again with Vettori serving as *commissario* over the Florentine forces being called to join a papal army massing against the French. He was then sent as ambassador to Francis I while the French monarch was in Rome. Vettori followed the French king first to Milan and then back to France. While there he kept up two separate streams of correspondence: to the *Otto di*

¹⁹⁹ Francesco Vettori, "Sommario della Istoria d'Italia (1511-1527)," *Scritti Storica e Politici*, ed. Enrico Niccolini (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1972): 133-246.

²⁰⁰ Najemy, *A history of Florence*, 262; Rubinstein, *Government*, 228-230, 238-241.

²⁰¹ Devonshire Jones, *Francesco Vettori*, 99-105.

²⁰² This less-famous Lorenzo de' Medici was *Il Magnifico*'s grandson and father to Catherine de' Medici, Queen Consort of France.

practica (council for foreign policy) and to the Medici. Letters to the former consist primarily of news; letters to the latter contain personal views and gossip.²⁰³

Vettori returned to Florence again in 1519 upon the death of the Duke of Urbino to help the young Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (future Pope Clement VII) govern. The two appear to have come into some conflict over who should be appointed to replace Giulio in Florence upon his papal election. Vettori favoured a *gonfaloniere* not related to the Medici family, but nonetheless remained a strong collaborator during the Cardinal of Cortona's government in the name of the very young Alessandro de' Medici. While he initially supported the republican government during the revolution of 1527, indeed, he negotiated on behalf of the "rebels" with Guicciardini who represented the regime, as the movement radicalized after the Sack of Rome, he was marginalized.²⁰⁴

With the re-establishment of the Medici duchy in 1530, Vettori became responsible not only for city finances, but also for the process of revictualling the city after the long siege.²⁰⁵ He ended his life receiving an annual benefice of 200 ducats from Pope Clement VII. Over the course of his long life, he interacted with the great political players of his era and had first-hand experience governing and managing city finances. He left an extensive correspondence that documents a wide range of contacts and concerns as well as a number of political and historical texts that draw upon his first-hand experience of faraway lands and tumultuous political times. He was also involved in constitutional reform and favoured absolutism.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Devonshire Jones, *Francesco Vettori*, 122.

²⁰⁴ Najemy, *A History of Florence*, 447-91; Devonshire Jones, *Francesco Vettori*, 198.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 232.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 244-9.

As should be clear, there was a close relationship between the members of the *Orti Oricellari*. They were friends. Many of them were related by blood and marriage. All but one of them, Crinito, was of a patrician family and had considerable experience serving as magistrates for their city. They were exceedingly well-travelled and frequently called upon to serve as ambassadors. Two of them, Bindaccio Ricasoli and Francesco Vettori, had the experience of a military command while another, Piero Martelli, came from a long line of generals.

In their literary pursuits, the members of the *Orti Oricellari* sought out each other's approval. They were antiquarians, translators and moral philosophers. Their correspondence and letters of dedication demonstrate the esteem that they had for each other. This is not to say that the group was harmonious. It is unlikely that Giovanni Canacci, renowned for his condemnation of oligarchical rule in Florence, refrained from criticising the Medici supporters among his friends. The famous conflict between Poliziano and Bartolomeo della Fonte must have been a sore spot between Crinito and della Fonte. Nevertheless, these men shared their thoughts, on history, philosophy and contemporary politics and produced works that must reflect their interactions. Their ability to support and encourage each other despite differences of opinion and experience promised the possibility of cooperative action among parties with differing interests but a shared aim.

Chapter Three: Historical Writing on the Eve of the Italian Wars

On 22 May 1453, in the last days of the Ottoman siege of Constantinople, there was a partial lunar eclipse that lasted seventy-five minutes. The besieged Byzantines and other eyewitnesses of the siege interpreted the eclipse as a bad omen, in the words of Niccolo Barbaro, “a signal to the Emperor of Constantinople, Constantine, that his rule was coming to end,” soon confirmed by the subsequent success of the Turkish forces over the Greek, Christian world.²⁰⁷ That accounts of the time mention the phenomenon is not surprising, given that celestial events such as eclipses and comets were interpreted during the pre-modern period as portents of the future.²⁰⁸

One notable exception to this trend was Bartolommeo della Fonte (1446-1513), a little known Florentine humanist polymath and humanities professor, who chose not to include this lunar eclipse in the entry for 1453 and the fall of Constantinople in his *Annales suorum temporum* (an annal that covers the period from 1448 to 1483).²⁰⁹ This was not an oversight on his part: on the contrary, it reflected a general pattern in the text, which makes no mention of celestial events. As such, it broke with a convention of the genre.

²⁰⁷ Nicolò Barbaro, *Giornale dell'assedio di Costantinopoli*, ed. Enrico Cornet (Vienna: Libreria Tendler & Comp., 1856), 46: “Pur ancora in questo zorno di vintido de mazo, a una hora de note el parse uno mirabel segnal in zielo, el qual segno fo quello che dè ad intender a Costantin degno imperador de Costantinopli, che el suo degno imperio si se aprossimava al finimento suo, come con efeto è stato.”

²⁰⁸ Jane L. Jervis, *Cometary Theory in Fifteenth-century Europe* (Dordrecht: D. Riedel, 1985), esp. 21-33; Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York, NY.: Zone Books, 1998), 51. Information about past celestial events, which is included in sources from around the globe, has permitted modern scholars to calibrate many of the various dating systems of premodernity and measure the rate of lengthening of the solar day and the lunar month. See Duncan Steel, *Eclipse: The Celestial Phenomenon that Changed the Course of History* (Joseph Henry Press: Washington, D.C., 2001).

²⁰⁹ There is some contention as to Della Fonte's date of birth. In the prefatory letter to his collection of letters, he writes that he is in his fiftieth year in 1496. Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, 3: “Unum scio: mihi quinquagesimum annum agenti non longe hanc abesse discessionem.” Concetto Marchesi offers 1445 as his accepted birthday without an archival reference in *Bartolomeo della Fonte* (Catania: Cav. Niccolò Giannotta, 1900), 10.

The omission of prodigies from historical texts in the fifteenth century testifies to a secularism that is usually associated with exceptional figures like Machiavelli, but which in fact was widespread among the intellectual elite of the time. It is worth noting, for instance, that many other accounts of the siege of Constantinople written by humanists also omit the eclipse.²¹⁰ Alison Knowles Frazier has recently drawn our attention to the humanists' emphasis on plausability in their hagiographical works.²¹¹ Della Fonte, whose life and work reveal him to be representative of the humanist movement, thus brings attention to a key facet of the intellectual milieu in which Machiavelli was steeped, and more broadly, to a community of like-minded thinkers. This is not to say that religion and devotional practices were unimportant for fifteenth century humanists. Rather, it is to emphasise the extent to which they understood human political events to occur separately from divine intervention.

This chapter uses Bartolommeo della Fonte to illuminate part of the network of people with whom Machiavelli interacted during his youth. Della Fonte was indeed a frequent participant in the *Orti Oricellari*. Since della Fonte is a less well-known figure to scholars of humanism, we will begin with an overview of his life and career before jumping into an analytical exposition of the *Annales*, a text that merits attention for the light it sheds on the community of Florentine humanists to which della Fonte belonged, and on the literary monument they collectively sought to build for themselves. This community was characterized by its commitment to learning and its concern for the events taking place in the Eastern Roman world. The conflict between the Ottoman

²¹⁰ See for example, J. R. Melville Jones (trans.), *The Siege of Constantinople 1453: Seven Contemporary Accounts* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972).

²¹¹ Alison Knowles Frazier, *Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

Empire and the Christian rulers is depicted in a decidedly secular setting, free from ecclesiastical time reckoning and celestial events.

Bartolommeo della Fonte: A Short Biography

Like so many humanists of the Italian Renaissance, we know little of Bartolommeo della Fonte's youth. Indeed, we would know little of his entire life were it not for a collection of sixty letters in three books, the *Epistolarum libri* (*Letters to Friends*) that was collated by della Fonte himself.²¹² This correspondence does more than merely provide biographical information. It provides us with a detailed picture of a Florentine scholar in the late *quattrocento* and early *cinquecento*. In other words, the epistles provide material for a cultural and intellectual history of Florentine humanism from 1467 to March 1513 in what their most recent editor describes as “a harmonious amalgam of carefully selected and balanced texts, designed as pieces of a varied and highly finished mosaic.”²¹³ Della Fonte was in many ways typical of Florentine humanists of the fifteenth century, as Charles Trinkaus first pointed out in a 1960 article entitled “A Humanist’s Image of Humanism: the Inaugural Orations of Bartolommeo della Fonte.”²¹⁴ Trinkaus’ scholarship on della Fonte’s depiction of the role and value of humanistic studies as well as his theory of penance demonstrates that della Fonte’s

²¹²Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palatino V, Capponi 77. The *Letters to Friends* has recently been made readily accessible to scholars through the 2008 publication of the first volume of an *editio maior* with the original Latin text and apparatus of all three books, an Italian translation of the same and an exhaustive commentary on Book I edited by Alessandro Daneloni. The publication of Daneloni’s commentaries on Books II and III is eagerly awaited. English-language scholars benefit from a Latin to English facing-page translation with brief commentary on all three books published by I Tatti in 2011 by Martin Davies. Bartolommeo della Fonte edited and rewrote many of the letters to create a collection that was focused and that would mark the significant moments in his life. The *Epistolarum Libri* is not a comprehensive volume of all della Fonte’s missives. See Alessandro Daneloni (ed.), *Bartholomaei Fontii: Epistolarum Libri* (Messina : Centro interdipartimentale di studi umanistici, 2008). Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of the letters are taken from Davies’ translation.

²¹³ Alessandro Daneloni, Introduction to *Letters to Friends*, by Bartolomeo Fonzio, X.

²¹⁴ Charles Trinkaus, “A Humanist’s Image of Humanism,” *Studies in the Renaissance* 7 (1960): 90-147.

writings are characteristic of wider trends within humanism that saw learning as essential to the development of an effective civic leader and that approached moral philosophy anthropocentrically.²¹⁵ Since Trinkaus' groundbreaking work, della Fonte's corpus—which extends from elegiac poems to treatises on penance—has received limited scholarly attention, but the praxis of his historical thought remains cursorily examined.²¹⁶

Youth and Education

Della Fonte was born between 1446 and 1447 and was of the same generation as Lorenzo de' Medici. In his letters, the Florentine humanist describes his childhood as a time of “straitened circumstances” in which learning was a comfort for him.²¹⁷ Bartolommeo's parents died when he was very young and he took over the care of his family. At the age of 22, he saw his sister married and then sought to “attach [him]self to some prince, by whose wealth and favour [he] could lead a more distinguished life.”²¹⁸ He spent the next four years in Ferrara under the patronage of Borso d'Este.

In his youth, della Fonte befriended Donato Acciaiuoli, a prominent Florentine statesman and man-of-letters, who was instrumental in shaping his views on the value of the erudite life over the mercantile. In a letter addressed to Pietro Cennini, della Fonte recounts a speech delivered by Acciaiuoli that justifies “the study of wisdom” as that

²¹⁵ Charles Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought* (South Bend: University of Notre-Dame Press, 1990): 626-633.

²¹⁶ See R. Zaccaria, “Della Fonte (Fonzio), Bartolommeo,” in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 36, 808-814 which includes an extensive bibliography from 813-4. Most recently, see Francesco Bausi, “La Lirica Latina di Bartolomeo della Fonte,” *Interpres* X (1990): 37-132.

²¹⁷ Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, trans. Davies, I, 18, 45: “Nam etsi tun puer interdum angustiis rerum exagitabar, me tamen ad sauvissimas Musas referens ex eis magna solatia capiebam.”

²¹⁸ Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, trans. Davies, I, 18, 45-7: “caepi mecum de me ornando aliquantulum cogitare statuique ad aliquem principem me conferre, cuius opibus et gratiam vitam honestiorem transigerem. Quare velut e specula quadam nostrorum Italiae principum vitam et mores acutum prospiciens, ad Hestensem me Borsium, Ferrariae ducem, contuli.”

which “educates us in integrity and virtue” and is the only “study that can bring us true esteem and glory.” By contrast, “the quest for popular reputation and the greed for wealth... wear down our spirits in hopes of attaining them, and once we have them, fill us with such anxiety at the thought of losing them that we find no peace in their possession.”²¹⁹ The speech validates learning on moral and secular rather than theological grounds. Study makes one happier and better in this world and not just better able to contemplate the next. The value of erudition, which is one of only two earthly pursuits that cannot be taken away by fortune, virtue being the other, is a recurring theme throughout della Fonte’s correspondence.²²⁰

Della Fonte returned to Florence in his twenty-fifth year and attended the *studio fiorentino* where the illustrious Cristoforo Landino and John Argyropoulos were his teachers. He would remain a disciple of the latter until 1467. Della Fonte, furthermore, attended the lectures of Bernardo Nuti, a renowned scholar of oratory from whom he learnt his pedagogical approach – one that was not focused on rote-memory but on doing, i.e. actually using the language.²²¹ This focus on praxis rather than memorisation was typical of the teaching of late fifteenth-century humanists who sought to prepare their pupils for an active life active in civic affairs. A letter to Bernardo Rucellai, written at the very end of his life, describes della Fonte's relationship with Nuti in great detail. His teacher, we read, when asked how his pupil might become more eloquent, responded that “there's no briefer or easier way than a burning love of virtue and a noble thirst for glory,

²¹⁹ Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, trans. Davies, I, 18, 49: “Virtus sola aeterna est et ocunda et utilis possidenti. Sola etenim sapientiae studia, nos ad honestatem et virtutem instituentia, in adversis rebus consolando, in prosperis adornando, ad veram laudem et gloriam nos perducunt. Contra vero aura popularis ac divitiarum cupiditas et quarendo habendi spe fatigant animos nostros et quaesita amittendi metu ita sollicitant, ut in eis nullam quietem reperiamus.”

²²⁰ Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, trans. Davies, I, 18; II, 6; II, 11; II, 17; III, 12.

²²¹ Marchesi, *Bartolomeo della Fonte*, 15-20.

something that eloquent men win in large measure while they live, and absolutely after death.”²²²

Della Fonte returned to Ferrara in the late 1460s and composed his first important work, *On Penance* (*De paenitentia*, 1469), a Latin treatise based on both classical and patristic sources that argues for the individual’s responsibility for his moral destiny.²²³ Upon the death of Borso d’Este (20 August 1471), Della Fonte returned to Florence to continue his studies and attended the lectures of Andronicus Callixtus of Trebizond on classical Greek authors such as Homer and Demosthenes. Now twenty-six years old, della Fonte accompanied his friend Donato Acciaiuoli on an ambassadorial expedition to Volterra. This voyage was Bartolommeo della Fonte’s first documented exposure to diplomatic negotiations and the culture of statesmen.

Della Fonte completed his education at the recently reinstituted University at Pisa in the early 1470s where he befriended the famed humanist, philologist and poet, Angelo Poliziano.²²⁴ When Donato Acciaiuoli was called upon again to serve as a Florentine ambassador, this time to France, in 1478, Bartolommeo della Fonte set out to accompany him, but was overcome by sickness in the Alps and turned back to Florence. Acciaiuoli himself died in Milan of fever during the return voyage from France and his death was recorded by della Fonte as a great loss.²²⁵ For three years Bartolommeo della Fonte

²²² Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, trans. Davies, III, 12, 179: "Nulla est via brevior ac facilius quam virtutis amore ut ardeas et honesto desiderio gloriae, quam eloquentes magnam dum vivunt, maximam post obitum consequuntur."

²²³ On *De paenitentia*, see Charles Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness*, vol. 2, 626-633.

²²⁴ Lorenzo de' Medici officially transferred the *studio* to Pisa in December 1472 leaving only a few chairs for humanists in Florence itself. See A. Gherardi (ed.), *Statuti della Università e Studio fiorentino dell'anno MCCCCLCCCVII* (Florence: G. P. Vieusseux, 1881), 273-6.

²²⁵ Bartolommeo della Fonte, *Annales suorum temporum* in *Liber de civitatis Florentiae Famosis Civibus*, by Filippo Villani, ed. Gustavo Camillo Galletti (Florence: Joannes Mazzoni, 1847), 158: "1478. ... mihique semper propter mutuum in me amorem colendissimus."

worked as an editor for the Florentine printing press San Iacopo a Ripoli and he produced editions of ancient Greek, Roman, patristic and vernacular texts.

Bartolommeo della Fonte began his teaching career at the *studio fiorentino* in 1481 after the death of Francesco Filelfo, whom he praises in the *Annales* as “a man most learned in Greek and Latin summoned to Florence from Milan at public expense in order that he might be a professor.”²²⁶ Della Fonte attributes his having been awarded the position to the prestige and favour of his friend, Bernardo Rucellai, in a letter addressed to the same.²²⁷ According to the testimony of one of his pupils, Ugolino Verino, della Fonte was a talented teacher.²²⁸ He lectured on many classical works of different genres including Valerius Flaccus' translation of the Greek epic *Argonautica*, Cicero's *Orations* and Juvenal's *Satires*. At the commencement of each of the courses, della Fonte delivered a public oration, the series of which have been preserved along with the many of the other extant works of his corpus in Wolfenbüttel, Herzog Bibliothek, codex 43.²²⁹

Della Fonte had an interesting teaching method that we know about thanks to a dispute he had with his one-time friend, Poliziano, that resulted in a brief hiatus from the

²²⁶ See Verde, *Lo studio fiorentino, 1473-1503*, ii; della Fonte, *Annales*, 159: “1481. Franciscus Philelphus vir Graece, Latinque doctissimum e Mediolano Florentiam accitus ut publica profiteretur aestu ac labore itineris confectus pridie Cal. Augusti Florentiae moritur anno aetatis quinto et octogesimo.”

²²⁷ Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, trans. Davies, II, 5, 83-85: “I have thought to lay before you all my thoughts on the matter, so that I may have the support of your prestige and favor. When with your help I took up my public teaching position, I supposed I should be taking on a good deal of work to live up to the general expectations (if such there were) held of me.”

²²⁸ Ugolino Verino writes an elegy to Bernardo Adimari praising learning in his era that mentions della Fonte explicitly: “Rhetor et insignis facundo Fonzio ore.” Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Plut. XXXIX, Cod. 40.

²²⁹ On the public oration at the commencement of courses, see Edwin A. Quain, “The Medieval Accessus ad Auctores,” *Traditio* III (1945): 215-264. Other Renaissance examples of this genre include those by Angelo Poliziano and Antonio Urceo 'Codro,' professor of Greek Letters at the University of Bologna.

lectern in 1483.²³⁰ Della Fonte taught by offering a reading focused on the abstruse and allegorical meaning of ancient texts whereas Poliziano emphasised philological, dialectical and rhetorical approaches. To better explain this difference, I borrow an analogy from Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine's *From Humanism to the Humanities*.

Poliziano's method

is as if the teacher had on his desk a beautiful completed jigsaw puzzle -- the text. Instead of calling up his students to look at the puzzle, he takes it apart, piece by piece. He holds each piece up, and explains its significance carefully and at length. The students for their part busy themselves writing down each explanation before the piece in question vanishes into the box.²³¹

By contrast, della Fonte adopted a holistic approach that emphasised the context out of which any given fragment was taken. In a conflict that began over the *Satires* of Juvenal, Poliziano vehemently attacked della Fonte's pedagogical method in public and Della Fonte responded with harsh criticism of Poliziano's character. He replied that "to heap abuse on the heads of the good and the learned before crowds of boys is the sign of a man of utter shamelessness and one ever ready to quarrel."²³²

Conflict among humanists over approaches to both pedagogy and scholarship was a common occurrence in fifteenth-century Italy as men-of-letters vied aggressively with one another for the benefits of patronage for the few professional positions available.²³³ Shortly after this vituperative interchange in November 1483, della Fonte left Florence

²³⁰ Indeed, Poliziano had been engaged in a conflict with another professor at the *studio*, Cristoforo Landino, over the latter's lecturing on traditional texts, like Virgil and Cicero. See Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1986), 83-94.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²³² Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, trans. Davies, I, 24, 69: "Impudentissimi hominis et parati semper ad lites est in puerorum circulis in probos et doctos viros maledicta congerere. Eruditi nanque ac boni consuevere mandare quae sentiunt litteris et non turpibus contumeliis, sed utilibus scriptis de veritate contendere.

²³³ See Christopher S. Celenza, *Renaissance Humanism and the Papal Curia: Lapo da Castiglionchio the Younger's De curiae commodis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

for Rome where he sought a haven of patronage. Since the return of the papacy from Avignon, Rome had become a centre for antiquarians and scholars who studied the ancient ruins and relics and supported themselves by teaching or through the patronage of the Pope or one of his cardinals.²³⁴ Della Fonte was quickly disillusioned by the Eternal City and he returned to his hometown that same year to resume teaching at the *studio*.²³⁵ While at Rome, he would have been further exposed to an international community of diplomats, ambassadors and learned clergymen that in many ways prefigured his active participation in the *Orti Oricellari* meetings of the 1500s.

Della Fonte did not remain in Florence very long. King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary sent him an invitation to travel to Buda in 1489 and to work on his project to construct a great library.²³⁶ Della Fonte spent about six months abroad and set about cataloging the collection chronologically. Although his visit to the court of Corvinus was brief, he remained in contact with the Hungarian king as well as other Hungarian humanists over the following years.

Upon his return to Italy, della Fonte stayed in Tuscany. He accepted investiture in the church of Montemurlo, in the diocese of Pistoia, in 1492 and thus began a new phase in his work more focused on religious matters. He returned to teaching at the *Studio* in 1495 and lectured on sacred scripture from 1497 until 1501. The titles of the inaugural

²³⁴ See J. F. d'Amico, *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome: Humanists and Churchmen on the Eve of the Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).

²³⁵ Della Fonte laments his decision to relocate to Rome in a letter to Bernardo Rucellai, *Letters to Friends*, trans. Davies, II, 5, 87: "hic vero nullam aut bene vivendi aut recte sciendi rationem haberi videam, nullis adduci praemiis aut honoribus unquam possem, ut ad horum hominum numerum me adiungerem, qui in ovium vestimentis lupi rapaces sunt et sub Christi pastorum nomine ovilia sibi commissa perdunt. Avaritia et luxuries et libido eorum expleri nequit; ignorantia quidem et mentis caecitas tanta est ut litteratos homines pro insanis, bonos autem habeant pro iniquis."

²³⁶ On the library of King Matthias Corvinus, see János Bak, "The Kingship of Matthias Corvinus: A Renaissance State?," in *Matthias Corvinus and the Humanism in Central Europe*, ed. Tibor Klaniczay and József Jankovics (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 1994): 34-47.

orations are all that remain, but they offer convincing evidence that della Fonte was concerned with reconciling humanistic studies with religious thought: *Oration on Sacred Scripture* (*Oratio in sacras litteras*), *Oration against Disparagers of Humanistic Studies* (*Oratio in obtrectatores studiorum humanitatis*), *Oration against Religious Critics of the Humanities* (*Oratio in religiosos vituperatores humanitatis*), and *Oration concerning True Philosophy* (*Oratio de vera philosophia*).

There is disagreement among scholars as to whether Bartolommeo della Fonte's religious turn coincided with support for the Florentine religious leader and Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola, who was condemned and burned as a heretic in 1498. On the one hand, Concetto Marchesi, in his 1900 biography of the humanist, argues that there were two people named Bartolommeo della Fonte and that the other was one of Savonarola's followers, called the *piagnoni*, not our humanist.²³⁷ On the other hand, the two eminent Savonarolan scholars Roberto Ridolfi and Lorenzo Polizzotto both include della Fonte in Savonarola's circle. Ridolfi argues that because della Fonte attended gatherings in the *Accademia Marciana*, the monastery with which Savonarola was affiliated, he and his companions, including Pietro Crinito, were under the sway of the controversial friar.²³⁸ Polizzotto interprets della Fonte's correspondence with four of Savonarola's supporters, Roberto and Jacopo Salviati, Giovanni Nesi and Simone Cinozzi, as evidence of his participation in the circle. Giovanni Nesi was one of Savonarola's staunchest supporters and his apologetic work *Oraculum de novo saeculo* is extant.²³⁹ There are no extant apologetic works penned by della Fonte nor are there traces of such

²³⁷ Marchesi, *Bartolomeo della Fonte*, 4.

²³⁸ Roberto Ridolfi, *Vita di G. Savonarola* I (Roma: A. Belardetti, 1952), 192.

²³⁹ Polizzotto, *The Elect Nation*, 86. On Giovanni Nesi, see Christopher S. Celenza, *Piety and Pythagoras in Renaissance Florence: The Symbolum nesianum* (Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2001), esp. 40-52.

writings. Polizotto argues that the subject matter of della Fonte's correspondence with these four known *piagnoni* is evidence of his support for the friar, although I do not see this as conclusive evidence, since della Fonte was also in correspondence with Bernardo Rucellai, who opposed and condemned the friar. Nevertheless, we can say for certain that Bartolommeo della Fonte's increased interest in religious matters from the 1490s onwards coincided with a wider Florentine phenomenon of religious fervour and millenarianism in the wake of the Italian Wars.

In the late-1490s, Bartolommeo della Fonte largely retired from the public eye and lived a quiet and private life travelling between Montemurlo and Florence. During these years, he frequented the *Orti Oricellari*. Bartolommeo della Fonte died at Montemurlo in October 1513 and left his heir, Francesco Pandolfini, a rich library as well as a vast collection of coins. At his express wish, he was buried in the church at Montemurlo.

Writings

Bartolommeo della Fonte's biography, when combined with his correspondence and works, provides a window onto the life of a humanist in the late-fifteenth century Florence. His works spanned a number of genres: philological examinations, original compositions in both prose and verse, translations and epistles. He had a wide range of antiquarian interests spanning from commentaries on classical satires including *Tadeus sive de locis Persianis* (*On Passages of Persius*, 1489), on the *Satires* of Persius, to a treatise on Roman epigraphy.²⁴⁰ He also showed an interest in the physical remains of the

²⁴⁰Woffenbüttel, Herzog Bibliothek, 43 Aug. Fol., cc. 3r-15r.

classical world more broadly in that he wrote a number of works on Roman monuments.²⁴¹ His classical studies, however, did not deter him from theological pursuits. His expertise in canon law and patristic sources is well-evidenced in a letter written to Simone Cinozzi on the subject of excommunication.²⁴² The humanist also wrote verse and a treatise on poetical theory addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici, an accomplished poet in his own right.²⁴³ Bartolommeo della Fonte was not merely an accomplished and prolific writer of Latin and translator of Greek, he also wrote in and examined the Tuscan vernacular -- his *Abundance or Reflection on Certain Passages from Petrarch's Triumphs* (*Pelago o ragionamento sopra alchuni luoghi de' Triumphi del Petrarcha*) applies philological investigation to the interpretation of certain problematic passages in Petrarch's *Trionfi*. He was at heart a polymath and a polygraph.

The documents surrounding Della Fonte show an avid interest in historical writing. He wrote a series of commentaries on the Roman historians Livy, Valerius Flaccus and Justin during the 1480s while he was teaching Caesar's *Gallic Wars* and Lucan's *Pharsalia* to students in Florence. He also wrote a number of biographies commemorating the lives of famous rulers and men-of-letters of the fifteenth century.²⁴⁴ His most notable historical work, however, is *Annales suorum temporum*, first published in 1737 by the Lamia publishing house of Florence and reprinted again in 1847 in a compilation of twelve works by famous fifteenth and sixteenth century Florentines edited

²⁴¹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lat. Misc, I, d.85; Fonizio, *Letters to Friends*, trans. Davies, I, 16 and II, 7.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, III, 4.

²⁴³ See Bausi, "La Lirica Latina di Bartolomeo della Fonte," 37-132.

²⁴⁴ These include *Vita M. Tulli*, *Vita Pauli Ghaccieti*, *Vita Sancti Iohannis Ghualberti*, *Vita Iohanni Vaivodae* and *Vita Petri Pandolphini*. See Zaccaria, "Della Fonte (Fontius), Bartolomeo," 813-4.

by G. C. Galletti in 1847.²⁴⁵ To my knowledge, there is no vernacular translation of the text.

Annales suorum temporum

First, we will examine the text's structuring principles. Next, we will identify the geographic scope of the text and the community memorialised in the *Annales*—Florentine and learned. Lastly, we will discuss the *Annales*' treatment of the supernatural and consider both what *is* included and what is not. The striking absence of celestial phenomena and of an ecclesiastical time frame locate the Ottoman Turks' advance against Christian rulers in a decidedly secular rather than religious context with the stakes being classical learning rather than the salvation of souls.

From the nineteenth century onwards, scholars have tended to undervalue the genre of the annal on account of its less erudite style, replete with repetition and literary clichés while lacking in classical, biblical and patristic references. Yet, recent scholarship by Sarah Foot and Edward Coleman demonstrates the usefulness of annals in analysing pre-modern conceptions of community and time.²⁴⁶ The annal was one of four main types of historical prose writing for readers of the late fifteenth century, the others being chronicles, commentaries and histories. Annals, chronicles and commentaries were understood as source material for histories, which were a literary genre akin to drama or

²⁴⁵ Florence, Riccardiana, cod. 1172.

²⁴⁶ Sarah Foot, "Finding the meaning of form: narrative in annals and chronicles," in *Writing Medieval History*, ed. Nancy Partner (London: Hodder, 2005): 88-97; Edward Coleman, "Lombard City Annals and the Social and Cultural History of Northern Europe," in *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. Sharon Dale, et. al. (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State Press, 2007): 1-20.

satire that sought to educate rather than record.²⁴⁷ This distinction between didactic works and the raw material out of which such didactic works were composed was handed down from the classical world.²⁴⁸ Renaissance humanists had rediscovered Cicero's *Brutus* in 1421 and would have been familiar with the orator's distinction between the two different types of historical writing—as “loose materials” and “a correct and elegant brevity of expression,” respectively—in that text.²⁴⁹

Structure

The *Annales suorum temporum*, like all annals, is structured by yearly entries. A given entry describes ostensibly unrelated events. For example, the year 1456, which is the longest entry, recounts seven different happenings without relating them to each other. It is worth quoting in its entirety:

1456. Ioannes Agrypylus, a Byzantine most learned in Peripatetic philosophy was brought from abroad to Florence with the greatest of all admiration as professor for fifteen years. Worthy of memory is that victory of the Hungarians over the Turks at Belgrade, a stronghold on the Danube. With Ioanne Vaivoda Ladislai as leader of the King's army on 21 July it happened that forty thousand of the Turks died in battle and no fewer fled. That same Vaivoda, indeed, falling into illness not many days after, died in the month of August. Also, Ioannes Capistranus of the Friars Minor, with knowledge of divine matter and presenting integrity of life, a most-learned rhetor, who both fought in the battle and excited the Christians in battle with the unfurled banner of the cross, not much later left life.

A horrible force of unstoppable winds mixed together with rain and hail on 23 September from the mouth of the ocean to the upper valley of the Arno destroyed the territory of the Florentines, contorting many trees and overturning ruined buildings. The Arno river, augmented by giant rains, flooded the greater part of Florence.

²⁴⁷ Hay, *Annalists and Historians*, 94.

²⁴⁸ Beryl Smalley, *Historians in the Middle Ages* (New York: Scribner, 1974), 15.

²⁴⁹ L. D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 102-109; Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Brutus*, ed. and trans. G. L. Hendrickson (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1939), lxxv, 262.

Franciscus Foscarius, when already thirty-four years Doge by the command of the Senate, abdicated on 25 September, at the age of 90, and died in pain not many days later when he had heard that Pasquales Malepetrus was named the new Doge.

On 7 December, Naples, Aversa, Capua, Gaeta and many other cities in Campania were shook by a lamentable earthquake. They were shaken in Samnio and Arianum and Apulia Beneventum, Venusia and Amalfi. The king of Persia and Armenia, called Usuncassanus (Usun Hassan), roused by the many and great letters and gifts of Pope Calixtus, attacked the superior Turks in many battles. John Lusignan, King of Cyprus, departed from life with his only daughter, Charlotte, as heir to the kingdom and his bastard son, Jacob, appointed as Archbishop of Cyprus.²⁵⁰

Of these seven distinct events, five are only one sentence long. There are no grammatical connections between events, no causal connections drawn to the past or other events. The use of a chronological list as a structuring principle has the obvious drawback that longer conflicts, such as that between the Turks and the Christians appearing in no less than fifteen of the thirty-six yearly entries, are presented as distinct episodes. A careful examination will nevertheless show that certain patterns emerge.

The dating system adopted in *Annales suorum temporum* demonstrates the humanist, and thus classicising, tendencies of the author: Bartolommeo della Fonte uses

²⁵⁰ Della Fonte, *Annales*, 154: “1456. Ioannes Argyropylos Byzantius Peripateticae philosophiae doctor egregius magno salario Florentiam accitus summa omnium admiratione ad annos quindecim est professus. Memorabilis illa Hungarorum de Turcis victoria ad Belgradum oppidum iuxta Danubium, Ioanne Vaivoda Ladislai Regis exercitus Duce, XII. Cal. Sextilis secuta est, quadraginta Turcorum millibus in pugna caesis, non paucioribus in fuga extinctis. Ipse quidem Vaivoda non multos post dies in morbum incidens Augusto mense interlit. Ioannes quoque Capistranus Ordinis Minorum scientia divinarum rerum, et vitae integritate praestans, et praedicator egregius, qui et pugnae interfuit et illato Crucis vexillo Christianos in certamen inflammavit, non post multo e vita discessit. Dira ventorum vis praecipti imbre, grandineque permixta X. Cal. Setembris ab infero mari exorta usque in Vallem Arni superiorem perpetuo tractu arboribus contortis atque disiectis aedificiis eversis, Florentinum vastavit agrum. Arbus fluvius iugibus pluviis auctus urbem Florentiam magna ex parte inundavit. Franciscus Foscarius, cum iam annos quatuor et triginta Venetiarum Dux iubente Senatu VII Cal. Octobris Principatu se abdicasset, nonagesimum annum agens, quantum post diem, cum audisset Pasqualem Malepetrum novum Ducem creatum, subito dolore interiit. Nonis Decembribus Neapolis, Aversa, Capua, Caietaque, et pleraque alia Campaniae oppida, lachrimabili terraemotu quassata sunt. In Samnio quoque Arianum, et in Appulia Beneventum, Venusia, et Amalfia, concussae sunt. Persidis et Armeniae Rex, Ioannes Usucassanus denominatus, Callisti Pontificis multis et magnis donis ac literis concitatus, multis in pugnis superior Turcos exagitat. Ioannes Lusignan Cypris Rex unica relicta filia Carlotta Regni herede, ac Iacobo filio spurio Cypri Archiepiscopo designato, vita migravit.”

both pre- and post-Julian calendar reform datings.²⁵¹ This use of the Roman calendar to date events might seem straightforward, but annals usually dated entries by feast days and holy offices as well as the day of the week.²⁵² There is one specific instance in *Annales suorum temporum* that conspicuously avoids ecclesiastical dating—the description of the Pazzi conspiracy, an assassination attempt on the de' Medici brothers, Giuliano and Lorenzo, in Santa Maria dei Fiori on 26 April 1478.²⁵³ The two young men were attending High Mass on Ascension Sunday when the attack occurred and the religious setting, before the crowded *duomo*, was an integral component of the event.²⁵⁴ Of all thirty-seven instances of exact dating in the *Annales*, not a single one is tied to a saints' day, a Christian holiday or ecclesiastical time. Nor is the hour of the day ever given with reference to the divine office. The system for reckoning time in the *Annales* is secular.

Community

Until the fifteenth century, annals and chronicles in Italy were usually local in scope. Like other examples of the genre from the Quattrocento, however, *Annales suorum temporum* evidences a concern with a broader geographic area.²⁵⁵ There are seventy-one different places referred to in the annal and although the majority of

²⁵¹ After the Julian calendar reform (45 BCE), the months of Quintilis and Sextilis became known as Julius and Augustus respectively. Whereas on five occasions, della Fonte uses the August form, on three occasions he uses the Sextilius form. One entry, 1456, uses both forms. There are four uses of the Iulius form for the month of July (1450, 1458, 1465 and 1479) and no instances of the Quintilis form.

²⁵² Coleman, "Lombard," 12-3.

²⁵³ Della Fonte, *Annales*, 158: "Florentiae VI. Cal. Maii in Templo Sanctae Reparatae Iulianus Medices Petri filius a Francisco Pactio, et Bernardo Baroncello Bandini filio, pluribus vulneribus confossus periit, Laurentius frater maior natu vulneratur evasit. Coniurationis capita de statu civitatis mutando, Medicibusque necandis, Franciscus Salviatus Pisarum Archiepiscopo Iacobus Eques, et Franciscus Pactii, necati sunt."

²⁵⁴ Angelo Poliziano informs his readers that the event occurred on Accension Sunday in his contemporary account. See Angelo Poliziano, *Della Congiura dei Pazzi*, ed. Alessandro Perosa (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1958), 24: "in quintum kalend. Maias anni a Christiana salute octavi et septuagesimi supra mille et quadringentos ; inque ipsum Dominicum ante Ascensionem diem reiecerat."

²⁵⁵ Sharon Dale, et. al., Introduction to *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, xi-xii.

locations are Italian, there is also a concern with Hungary, Anatolia, the Caucasus and the Aegean – lands progressively threatened by the Ottoman advance during the rule of Mehmet II. The larger Italian cities, i.e. Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples, figure prominently in the *Annales*, but smaller towns are not unrepresented. Indeed, the *Annales* begins with the death of Guidantonio Manfredi of Faenza, a *condottiere* from a smaller town in the Emilia-Romagna.

One international player, England, is strikingly absent from the *Annales*. The only mention of the English is in reference to the Hundred Years' War in the entry for 1452 when “Gascons and the Bordelais defected from the King of France and returned to the English.”²⁵⁶ The dynastic changes on the English throne receive no mention. One might, for example, expect an entry on the murder of King Henry VI in 1471.²⁵⁷ By contrast, the untimely and violent deaths of Italian leaders, like that of Tibertus the Lombard, leader of the Siennese forces, who was thrown headlong from a window in 1455, are recounted with some degree of specificity.²⁵⁸ Della Fonte either did not know of the violent end of the English King Henry VI at the hands of Edward IV, or he did not think it worthy of mention. This lack of interest in or awareness of English events demonstrates the extent to which England seems peripheral to the Italian humanists up until 1494 despite the well-documented trading and banking relationships between Western Europe and the Italian city-states. The international events included in *Annales suorum temporum* are Eastern rather than Western in focus.

²⁵⁶ Della Fonte, *Annales*, 153: “1452. ... Vascones atque Bordeni a Rege Francorum deficiunt, ad Anglosque redeunt.”

²⁵⁷ Bertram Wolffe, *Henry VI* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 347-349.

²⁵⁸ Della Fonte, *Annales*, 154: “1455. ... Tibertus natione Lombardus, patria Coregio ortus, Senensis exercitus dux, nonis Septembribus, ex fenestris aedium summi Senensis Magistratus praecipitatur, eiusque milites populo in praedam dantur.”

Although the majority of the entries in the *Annales* are related to events occurring on the Italian peninsula, the term “Italia” appears only three times and always as a space in danger. On two occasions it is with respect to Italy as a geographic entity attacked by foreigners: Charles of Anjou entered Italy in 1453 (and was repulsed) and the Turks took Otranto in 1480. In 1448, the opening year of the *Annales*, a great pestilence in Tuscany spread throughout almost all of Italy.²⁵⁹ Neither Italian, the adjectival form, nor Italians, as a subject, appear. Della Fonte depicts Italy as a geographic space that can be ravaged, but it does not represent a set of shared cultural characteristics or political institutions.

Annales suorum temporum does depict a community, but one at a much smaller level. Bartolommeo della Fonte uses the first-person-plural, as either adjective or pronoun, on four separate occasions in his annal in order to establish a shared community between his reader(s) and himself. The first instance occurs in the date-entry for 1454 when

“A Greek book of the Gospels was brought after the defeat of Constantinople by Malcus, a certain Greek man, to Florence and was purchased at a great price and ... [t]hat same Malcus brought to us relics from the wood of the true cross and the clothes of Christ.”²⁶⁰

The use of “we” also crops up in two military conflicts between Florence and other Italian powers (Volterra and King Ferdinand), but della Fonte is not consistent in his use of the first-person plural subject. Indeed, he opts to use the impersonal “Florentini” as the subject of twenty-one sentences.

²⁵⁹ Della Fonte, *Annales*, 153: “1448. ... Gravissima per omnem Tusciam pestis fuit, quae etiam per totam fere Italiam est evagata.”

²⁶⁰ Della Fonte, *Annales*, 153: “1454. ... Evangeliorum Graecus liber Constantinopolitana clade subductus a Malcho quodam Graece homine Florentiam perlatus, ac magno emptus, in Supremi Magistratus palatio collocatur, ubi et Paudectarum libri Pisarum spoliū adservantur. Idem Malchus de Ligno Sanctissimae Crucis, et Veste Christi, reliquias ad nos pertulit: quae christallina in cruce in Templo maximo Sanctae Reparatae adservantur.”

All Florentines are not equally included in the community that della Fonte delineates in the *Annales*. Unlike the Lombard city annals examined by Edward Coleman, della Fonte does not record the price of grain in years of shortage nor is he ever moved to describe any hardships endured by the population.²⁶¹ Instead, he is concerned with memorialising Florentine cultural accomplishments such as the re-opening of the University of Pisa in 1473 and the building of towers of marble at Livorno in 1460. Social conditions are beyond the purview of the *Annales*.

The *Annales suorum temporum* is concerned with two kinds of men: political leaders and men-of-letters. The division of these two categories is starker than the writings of figures like the humanist Pope Pius II Piccolomini (1458-1464) might lead us to believe. The marking of the deaths of men-of-letters as significant dates in *Annales suorum temporum* demonstrates Bartolommeo della Fonte's commitment to the *fama* of his colleagues living on, as would the *fama* of the great military and political leaders of the fifteenth-century beside whose battles and deaths they are listed. There are thirteen men of letters discussed in the *Annales suorum temporum* and only one artist, the sculptor Donatello, whose death is announced in the entry for 1466.²⁶²

The entries related to fifteenth-century humanists are the most personal and descriptive of the *Annales suorum temporum*. Bartolommeo della Fonte describes these antiquarians and men-of-letters with adjectives like “*doctus*” and “*eruditissimus*.” He relies on first-hand knowledge to testify to their greatness. Monuments to their learning in

²⁶¹ Coleman, “Lombard,” 10.

²⁶² Carlo Arretino (Marsuppini), John Agyropoulos, Aeneas Piccolomini, Iannotti Manetti, Poggio Bracciolini, Biondo Flavio, Matteo Palmieri, Domizio Calderini, Donato Acciaiuoli, Cristoforo Landino, Francesco Filelfo, Bartolommeo Platina and Paolo Toscanelli.

the form of tombs and funeral orations are listed -- and provide an opportunity to include another man-of-letters within the text:

1475. Matteo Palmieri died in Florence at the age of 70: The funeral was carried out honourably. Alamanno Rinucci praised him with a eulogy from an illustrious dais in the Church of Saint Peter the Greater.²⁶³

These entries do more than provide us with useful biographical information. They demonstrate the ways in which literary production and building projects were seen to be a way of overcoming the finality of death for both a patron, like Cosimo de' Medici, and the man-of-letters himself. These men reflect Bartolommeo della Fonte's participation within a wider community of learning and letters on the Italian peninsula. That community is depicted as engaged in a conflict with the Ottoman Turks over the remains of the classical heritage.

Prodigia

Another manner in which the *Annales* is strikingly this-worldly is in its omission of celestial events. As we saw, some chronicles omitted the lunar eclipse at the Siege of Constantinople, but there were many noticeable eclipses and comets from 1448 to 1483. There was a partial solar eclipse with a magnitude of 0.755 that would have been visible within 500 kilometres of Rome, weather permitting, for just over 90 minutes in the late morning of 29 August 1448.²⁶⁴ Perhaps on this occasion it was a cloudy day, but it seems highly unlikely that all twelve total lunar eclipses visible in Italy over this time period

²⁶³ Della Fonte, *Annales*, 157: "1475. Mattheus Palmerius LXX aetatis anno Florentiae obiit: funus honorifice elatum est. Laudavit e suggestu insigni cum oratione funebri Alamannus Rinuceinus in sancti Petri Maioris Aede."

²⁶⁴ "Five Millenium Catalog of Solar Eclipses, 1401-1500," *National Aeronautics and Space Administration*. <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEcat5/SE1401-1500.html>. My thanks to Dr. Sean Cantrell for his help in finding this valuable resource.

went unseen.²⁶⁵ Eclipses, however shocking they might be to the unlearned, were natural phenomena well understood since antiquity. Comets, on the other hand, were celestial visitors that inspired awe and wonder.

Indeed, there were six comets visible from Europe from 1448 until 1483 and none of them appear in *Annales suorum temporum*.²⁶⁶ The most striking omission from the *Annales* is that of Haley's Comet (IP/Haley) which appeared in the sky for many weeks in June 1456. It was a commonly-held belief in Europe since ancient times that comets were signs of calamity or change that appeared during times of war and famine and as we saw above, *Annales'* entry for 1456 depicts a year of earthquake, flooding and a major Christian victory at the Battle of Belgrade.²⁶⁷ Bartolomeo Platina, a Roman humanist whose *Lives of the Popes* Bartolommeo della Fonte was familiar with, wrote of the sighting of the comet and Pope Callixtus III's interpretation of the object in the sky as portentous:

Soon after appeared a comet over several days, with a long red, hairy tail in the sky. Since the astrologers said that it portended a great plague, dearth, or some future battle, Calixtus appointed a fast for several days, to pray to God that, if any judgment hung over them, He would be pleased to avert and turn it upon the Turks, the enemies to Christianity. Beyond that, he gave order that God should be supplicated every day, and that a bell should be rung about noon to give people notice when they should join in prayer for the Christians against the Turks; so that the Christians, assisted by the prayers

²⁶⁵ There are three types of lunar eclipses: partial, penumbral and total. Only the latter is likely to be seen by the naked eye from Earth.

²⁶⁶ Gary W. Kronk, *Cometography: A Catalog of Comets*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 372-289.

²⁶⁷ Sarah Schechner Genuth, *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), esp. 51-88.

of the whole Church, fought against the Turks at Belgrade, with John Vaivoda, a most famous man and leader, and John Capistranus, of the Order of Minors, bearing the Holy Cross, and conquered them at Belgrade in a great battle.²⁶⁸

Della Fonte, by contrast, recounts this same event shorn of all its consequences for global Catholicism even as he includes the same leaders, John Vaivoda and John Capistranus. Comets may not have made it into the *Annales*, but they were of interest to the community of humanists outlined by della Fonte. Paolo Toscanelli, praised as much for his classical learning as his mathematical and astrological skills in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, is the last learned man whose death is included in the *Annales*.²⁶⁹ He kept assiduous notes on all six comets and over the course of the years developed a system for charting their longitudinal and latitudinal courses in the night sky.²⁷⁰ Toscanelli's approach to the comets as natural phenomena to be measured and charted perhaps points to della Fonte's reasons for leaving them out of the *Annales*.

The *Annales* is not entirely lacking in *prodigia*, or strange things. Natural disasters, events outside of the regular natural order, were included as well as two monstrous births. The first, the birth of still-born septuplets in 1470 to Alphonso Pieti and his wife of Florence, is explicitly called a "prodigious birth" and linked to the previous

²⁶⁸ Bartolomeo Platina, *Historici Liber de vita Christi ac omnium pontificum*, ed. Giacinto Gaida (Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1913-1932), 342: "Apparente deinde per aliquot dies cometa crinito et rubeo, cum mathematici ingentem pestem, charitatem annonae, magnam aliquam cladem futuram dicerent, ad avertendam iram Dei Calistus aliquot dierum supplicationes decrevit: ut siquid hominibus immineret, totum in Thurcos Christiani nominis hostes converteret. Mandavit praeterea, ut assiduo rogatu deus flecteretur, in meridie campanis signis dari fidelibus omnibus, ut orationibus eos iuvarent, qui contra Thurcos continuo dimicabant. Credederim tum ego precibus omnium Christianos ad Bellogradum contra Thurcos dimicantes duce Ioanne Vaivoda viro clarissimo, astante etiam Ioanne Capistrano ordinis Minorum, crucemque pro vexillo hostibus inferente, eos Bellogradum oppugnantes ingenti clade superasse."

²⁶⁹ Della Fonte, *Annales*, 159: "1482. Paulus Tuscanellus Medicus et insignis Philosophus, magnum exemplar virtutis, annum agens quantum et octogesimum idibus Maiis Florentiae in patrio solo moritur."

²⁷⁰ Jervis, *Cometary Theory*, 43-69.

event, the Turkish victory at Negroponte, by the phrase “on that same day.”²⁷¹ The second monstrous birth, in contrast, immediately follows the entry for the Christian (Venetian) victory against the Turks at Sutri in 1474 and is entirely independent from any of the other events for the year. Details as to the exact nature of the deformity are related, but no prodigious interpretation is offered:

In the Volterranean countryside on 1 June, a child was born by monstrous birth with the head, teeth, eyes, legs and neck of a cow with a handful of hair on its brow which at the peak turned fire-red. The rest was the body of a man with hair on its arms and its hand leonine claws.²⁷²

Monsters *might* be signs of calamity, but they need not necessarily be. This ambiguous stance towards *prodigia* demonstrates how wonder and the miraculous were still an integral part of the humanist imagination, but increasingly came to be seen as part of the natural order rather than supernatural manifestations throughout the early modern period.²⁷³ Alison Frazier has recently documented a parallel process in humanist hagiography of rarely including the massive catalogues of miracles documented for canonisation.²⁷⁴

From the bare outlines of his *Annales* certain patterns emerge that reflect the intellectual and social environment in which Bartolommeo della Fonte participated. We see evidence of his extensive epistolary network in the range and breadth of events he includes, focused primarily on the Italian peninsula but including the ongoing conflict between the Ottomans and Christian rulers. This conflict plays out in a surprisingly

²⁷¹ Della Fonte, *Annales*, 156: “1470. ... Alphonsi Pieti Florentini civis uxor uno eodemque die prodigioso partu septem geminas abortivas effudit.

²⁷² Della Fonte, *Annales*, 157: “In Volterrani agri Pago Rughiana idibus Sextilibus monstroso partu infans oritur, capite, dentibus, oculis, cruribus, vagulisque bovinis, in fronte pilorum extante manipulo, ac vertice mali punici igniti speciem referente. Reliquum corpus hominis erat, brachia pilis oblecta, manuum ungues leonine.”

²⁷³ Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, 173-214.

²⁷⁴ Frazier, *Possible Lives*, esp. 315-327.

secular environment with only two examples of *prodigia* and no celestial events whatsoever. The *Annales* seeks to memorialise the humanist culture of fifteenth-century Italy by recording the deaths of renowned men-of-letters and the cultural achievements of the age. These humanists, specialists in the study of classical texts, especially of Greek origin, are depicted as engaged in a conflict of their own with the Ottoman Turks, not fighting with men and arms like the political leaders included in the *Annales*, but with quill and paper in order to preserve the heritage of the ancient world. The narrative outlined by Bartolommeo della Fonte is one of secular learning rather than the salvation of Christian souls.

The *Annales* does not provide the reader with an explicit discussion of historical practice and style, but della Fonte also left behind two orations that discuss a philosophy of history. Bartolommeo della Fonte's six orations were delivered at the commencement of six series of lectures given at the *studio fiorentino* in front of his colleagues. Trinkaus, examining these reflections on humanistic studies by Bartolommeo della Fonte, whom he describes as a "mediocre" humanist with an "exceptionally high degree of self-consciousness concerning his profession," believes the ideas about learning he expressed, replete with stock formulations and literary clichés, are more representative of the prevailing opinions of his circle than analysis of exceptional figures such as Angelo Poliziano.²⁷⁵ The orations are structured according to a standard pattern: an opening salutation and praise of the audience, general praise of the value to mankind of the type of learning being examined, a historical sketch of its development, a defense in face of criticism against it, and an exhortation to his students to apply themselves zealously to

²⁷⁵Trinkaus, "A Humanist's Image," 94-5.

their studies. The orations were intended to impress upon their audience the vast erudition of the speaker who frequently mentions little-known and sometimes entirely lost classical writers.

Trinkaus notes that there is a tension between two of the orations with respect to the categorization of history. In *Oration on the Good Arts* delivered in 1484 when della Fonte lectured on Silius' *Punica*, he discusses not only grammar, poetry, oratory and history but also philosophy – the five *studia humanitatis*.²⁷⁶ In this oration, and following Cicero's lead, history is considered as a subdivision of rhetoric:

For history is a large part of the art of rhetoric, and although it is not ordinarily expressed through the principles of the orators, still it emanates from them in such a way, and so depends on them, that lacking this art of speech itself, history would appear crude and feeble.²⁷⁷

He emphasises the political and persuasive value of historical writing.

When della Fonte lectured on two Latin historical texts in 1482 he devoted his entire opening oration to the praise of history. As an introduction to lectures on Caesar's *Civil War* and Lucan's *Pharsalia*, della Fonte provides a historical account of the development of the historical craft from its origins in ancient Greece to its decay in the Middle Ages and a recent revival thanks to Francesco Petrarch and the patronage of magnanimous rulers. He then considers history as a subfield of moral philosophy and

²⁷⁶ For an overview of the *studia humanitatis*, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Humanist Learning in the Italian Renaissance," in *Renaissance Thought and the Arts* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990): 1-19.

²⁷⁷ Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, 43 Aug., f. 157r: "Est enim historia magna pars facultatis rhetoricae, quae licet separatim non sit expressa rhetorum praeceptionibus, ita tamen ab eis emanat atque dependet, ut sine hac ipsa dicendi arte inculta et rudis et debilis videatur." Trinkaus' article also includes a nicely rendered English translation of large sections of the *Orations* in "A Humanist's Image," 99-104. Unless otherwise noted, I have used his translation from the Latin.

emphasises its ability to extend the range of experience beyond one man's lifetime in developing prudence and wisdom:

Thus it is through history that we who are long separated from the age of our ancestors, by reading of their deeds seem both to have lived in those times and to have been present at those events. For whereas this knowledge gained from not only the prosperous but also the adverse affairs of others certainly confers understanding free from all dangers, we owe very much to those who in order to make us and our posterity participants in past events founded history. They confer by their industry and labor the greatest utility on the life of mortals because it is essential to teach what is to be sought and what avoided. For when we read of the deeds of our ancestors, [whether] right or wrong ones, and we ponder their intentions, vicissitudes, and consequences, we are taught what is especially expedient for us. Since those who are born wise value prudence as the experience of many things, frequently they who eagerly study history surpass their ancestors in wisdom and prudence. For just as much as the long duration of time encompasses more events than the age of a single man, so much more prudent must he be thought who not only attains a knowledge of his own people and age but through accurate reading comes to know all nations and times. Thus they gather the richest fruits for effective living, both the young men whom the reading of history renders equal to their elders in prudence, and those of mature age who besides learning from experience are made learned by the examples of the past as well.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ 43. Aug., f. 145r-145v, trans. Kristeller in "A Humanist's Image," 100: "Quae sane cognitio ex aliorum cum prosperis tum adversis rebus percepta cum doctrinam habeat omnium periculorum expertem, plurimum debemus iis qui ut nos posterosque nostros praeteritarum rerum participes facerent, historiam condiderunt. Sua enim industria et labore maximam utilitatem vitae mortalium afferentes quid sequi quid vitari oporteat docuere. Nanque maiorum recte aut perperam facta cum legimus, eorumque consilia,

Della Fonte explicitly contrasts history, “fabricated not by rational principles but by speech applied to actions or events” with “other learned disciplines [wherein] consequences are gathered by reasoning from those elements which preceded it.”²⁷⁹ Although della Fonte invokes the exemplary paradigm in order to justify history, it is specifically “the intentions, vicissitudes and consequences” of previous generations’ that are worthy of study, not merely their actions. Here, della Fonte points out that there is a divide between intention and result and that history helps us understand that disparity. Both justifications for the study of history relied on its practical aims. Good history writing is necessarily rhetorically effective.

Bartolommeo della Fonte’s prolific career and writings demonstrate this member of the Orti Oricellari’s active engagement with history both on a philosophical and practical level. For della Fonte, knowledge of the past was a key component of developing wisdom, emulating the actions of virtuous men of the past, he believed, was not enough. Understanding their intentions and the unintended consequences of their actions was integral to acquiring prudence. Although della Fonte’s *Annales* lacks the rhetorical flourish and style of the historical texts that he taught while at the *studio*, we can nevertheless glean insight into his conception of the social world he set out to document. The *Annales* depicts a community that is learned and Eastern-oriented on the

varietates, eventus perpendimus, quid maxime nobis expediat admonemur. Cum vero multarum rerum experientia prudentiam gigni sapientes existiment, frequenter historiam lectitantes maiores natu consilio et prudentia facile superant. Quanto enim plura exempla rerum longi diuturnitas temporis, quam unius hominis aetas complectitur, tanto est prudentior censendus is qui non suae tantum gentis aetatisque, sed omnium nationum et temporum memoriam accurata lectione complectitur. Itaque ad bene degendam vitam uberrimos fructus capiunt, cum iuniores, quos rerum gestarum lectio senioribus aequat prudentiam, tum aetate maturi, quos praeter experientiam rerum exempla quoque praeteritorum erudiunt.”

²⁷⁹ 43. Aug. f. 149r: “Non enim in historia perinde accidit atque in caeteris sapientiae disciplinis, in quibus consequentia ex his quae praecesserunt ratiocinando colliguntur. Quibus observatis cuiusvis artis peritia deletuis etiam penitus monumentis ope ingenii non secus reparatur, quam a priscis hominibus in verita fuit. Historia nanque non rationibus, sed rebus adhibita oratione conficitur.”

eve of the French campaign in Italy, with little concern for the illiterate masses or even most of Western Europe. The time-frame and causal explanations are surprisingly secular and the conflict between Ottoman and Christian is depicted as a cultural rather than religious clash.

*Bernardo Rucellai was a highly talented, deeply cultured, and very eloquent man; but according to the wise men, he was somewhat lacking in judgment. Nevertheless, because he could hold ornate and acute discourse with his nimble tongue, and because he was very ingenious, he was universally considered to be a very wise man. But his nature was such that he was never satisfied with any government the city had. ... his reputation for wisdom was so great that his words always commanded attention and respect in the consultations. — Francesco Guicciardini*²⁸⁰

Chapter Four: Bernardo Rucellai, Humanist and Diplomat

Bernardo di Giovanni Rucellai was a prominent Florentine political and cultural player during the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century who had both strong familial and personal ties to the Medici. His involvement in the literary and political life of Florence is well-documented through his extant works, his correspondence, the Florentine government's archival sources and the works of contemporary historians such as Parenti, de' Nerli and Guicciardini. This chapter will demonstrate that Bernardo Rucellai's extensive political and diplomatic experience inflects his understandings of good governance, liberty and communal identity as presented in his history of the Italian Wars of 1494-5 —*De bello italico*. The purpose of the following biographical narrative is both to demonstrate that Bernardo Rucellai was an integral player in Florentine political culture of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century and to introduce those actors who are the subjects of his historical account of Charles VIII's Italian War and his collaborators in governance.

Bernardo Rucellai was born in Florence on 11 August 1448 to Jacopa Strozzi and Giovanni di Piero Rucellai (1403-1481). Prominence in Florence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a result of three different, yet overlapping factors: political power,

²⁸⁰ Francesco Guicciardini, *History of Florence*, trans. Mario Domandi (New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row, 1970), XXVI, 258-260.

economic power and social power.²⁸¹ The Rucellai were a wealthy family of one-time wool-dyers with real and visible power. The 1457 "catasto" (tax assessment) shows that the Rucellai were one of only three families out of the more than seventy-five hundred who filed returns owing more than one hundred florins in taxes.²⁸² In 1508, there were 41 Rucellai in the *Consiglio maggiore* and there were 9 different Rucellai who served on the *Consiglio degli Ottanta* for the *Arti Maggiori*.²⁸³ Numerous relatives in government was a key component in political influence and power in Florence and the Rucellai were what contemporaries would have described as *case grande*, meaning both a large and eminent family.²⁸⁴ Giovanni solidified the relationship between the Rucellai and the Medici on 8 June 1466 at the extravagant wedding between Cosimo de' Medici's granddaughter, Nannina (Lorenzo de' Medici's sister), and Bernardo.²⁸⁵ With this marriage-alliance to the dominant Florentine family, the prominence of the Rucellai family's position could only have been increased. Giovanni himself had occupied a number of government positions including *priore* (magistrate on the *Signoria*, the body empowered to introduce legislation) in 1463 and *gonfaloniere di giustizia* (magistrate with voting rights on the *Signoria* who was also entrusted with command of the internal security forces) in

²⁸¹ Nicholas Scott Baker, *The Fruit of Liberty*, 9. See F. W. Kent, "Palaces, Politics and Society in Fifteenth-Century Florence," in *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance* 2 (1987): 41-70; Brenda Preyer, "Florentine Palaces and Memories of the Past," in *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*, ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 176-194; Jill Burke, "Visualizing Neighborhood in Renaissance Florence: Santo Spirito and Santa Maria del Carmine," *Journal of Urban History* 32,;5 (2006): 699-700.

²⁸² de Roover, *The Rise and Decline*, 31.

²⁸³ Cooper, "The Florentine Ruling Group under the *governo popolare*, 1494-1512," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 7 (1985), 76; *Ibid.*, 165.

²⁸⁴ Cooper, "The Florentine Ruling Group," 88. See also F. W. Kent, *Household and Lineage*, esp. chapter 4; D. V. Kent, *The Rise of the Medici: faction in Florence, 1426-1434* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 37-49.

²⁸⁵ For a description of the wedding festivities, see Giovanni Rucellai, *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, in *Giovanni Rucellai e il suo zibaldone*, ed. Alessandro Perosa and F. W. Kent (London: Warburg Institute, 1960-1981), I, ff. 49a(r)-50b(v), 28-34.

1475.²⁸⁶ Bernardo's father was a patron of the visual arts surpassed only by Cosimo de' Medici in fifteenth-century Florence. The Palazzo Rucellai, where Bernardo lived for most of his life, was decorated with works by such illustrious names as Filippo Lippi, Domenico Veneziano, Vittorio Ghiberti and Giovanni Vernini and stood as a symbol of the family's wealth and importance. Ostentatious expenditure on cultural productions, like the marble façade of Santa Maria Novella that was designed by the polymath Leon Battista Alberti, proclaimed to the entire city not only the Rucellai's wealth and generosity but also their concern for the well-being of Florence. To be considered as cultural leaders was an essential element of the continued popularity and prominence of political leaders.²⁸⁷ The ability to shape the urban geography to support their power and influence by building a palace or bestowing a family name on a piazza or a street was especially important in Florence where the office-holding class had no titles, nobility or even juridical status to justify their social, economic and political predominance.²⁸⁸ Furthermore, Giovanni's interests lay beyond business and politics. His *zibaldone*, a private book of excerpts and wise-sayings composed for his children, Bernardo and Pandolfo, and their descendants demonstrates a familiarity with classical learning and literature, including many translations of passages from Latin and Greek authors.²⁸⁹ Upon the death of his father, Bernardo assumed the leadership of his extensive extended family.

²⁸⁶Cosenza, *Dictionary of the Italian Humanists*, vol. 5, 1279-1280. For a succinct overview of the changing Florentine political constitution during Bernardo Rucellai's life, see Riccardo Fubini, introduction to *Politica e pensiero politico nell'Italia del Rinascimento: Dallo stato territoriale al Machiavelli* (Florence: Edifir, 2009): 7-16; see also Nicolai Rubinstein's *The Government of Florence*.

²⁸⁷ On how cultural interests and aspirations can be interpreted as political propaganda, see Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici*, esp. 41-128 & 366-384.

²⁸⁸Baker, *The Fruit of Liberty*, 22.

²⁸⁹*Giovanni Rucellai e il suo zibaldone*, 2 vols., ed. Alessandro Perosa and F. W. Kent (London: Warburg Institute, 1960-1981) contains both the Latin original of the *zibaldone* in the appendix and an analysis of its contents in the 2nd volume.

Throughout the fifteenth century, Florence was ruled by an oligarchic regime with the Medici at the helm. Lorenzo de' Medici referred to his main collaborators as “the gang” in his personal correspondence.²⁹⁰ Melissa Meriam Bullard has gone so far as to describe the period of Lorenzo's dominance in Florentine politics as rule by committee.²⁹¹ From his youth, Bernardo Rucellai was part of the intimate circle around Lorenzo de' Medici. Two letters written in the 1460s by Giovanni Rucellai to Lorenzo's father, Piero, describe the children playing and studying together in Florence and at the de' Medici villa, Careggi, in the Tuscan countryside.²⁹² In July 1461, the bonds between the Rucellai and de' Medici were strengthened by the espousal of Bernardo to Lorenzo's sister, Nannina de' Medici. Their wedding occurred five years later on 8 June 1466. Before her death in 1493, Nannina bore Bernardo four sons, Cosimo (born 1 June 1468 and named after his grandfather, Cosimo de' Medici), Piero (second-born between 1468-1473), Palla (born 1 July 1473), and Giovanni (born 20 October 1475).²⁹³

Over the course of the 1470s and 1480s, Bernardo Rucellai was active in Florentine politics both as an ambassador and a governor. Rita Maria Comanducci has identified almost 350 extant pieces of correspondence between the Medici family and Bernardo Rucellai (primarily Bernardo writing to his brother-in-law, Lorenzo) and over 400 pieces of extant correspondence between Rucellai and various bodies of the Florentine government during that same period.²⁹⁴ Rucellai wrote home from a wide array of Italian towns of differing sizes: Milan, Naples, Vigevano, Casoretto, Vicopisano,

²⁹⁰ Nicholas Scott Baker, *the Fruit of Liberty*, 50.

²⁹¹ Melissa Meriam Bullard, *Lorenzo il Magnifico: Image and Anxiety, Politics and Finance* (Florence: Olschki, 1994), 127.

²⁹² Florence, Archivio di Stato Fiorentino, *MaP*, f. XVII, c. 358; *ibid.*, f. XXVII.

²⁹³ Giovanni Rucellai, *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, f. 69b(v), 35.

²⁹⁴ Rita Maria Comanducci, *Il carteggio di Bernardo Rucellai Inventario* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1996).

Soragna, Chiaravalle, Fontanella, Parma and Firenzuola. In all, we have over 850 pieces of diplomatic correspondence written or received by Bernardo over the course of his life.²⁹⁵ Rucellai not only reported back to Lorenzo from afar, but also accompanied Lorenzo de' Medici to Rome in 1471 in order to congratulate Sixtus IV upon his election to the Papal See. Although his diplomatic ventures kept him from home for most of these years, he nevertheless was a member of the *Consiglio dei Cento* (an oligarchic council which, after its reform in 1471 had sole authority over tax laws) in 1474.²⁹⁶ Rucellai was in Pisa on 28 June 1476 and four years later, in 1480, he was nominated as one of four citizens, along with Lorenzo de' Medici, tasked with reforming the university there.²⁹⁷ This active involvement in Florentine intellectual life would continue throughout his life.

Bernardo had extensive diplomatic experience within the Italian peninsula as a representative of Florence. He was nominated as ambassador to the Sforza in February 1482. The next year, 1483, he was present at the Congress of Cremona that set out to oppose Venetian expansion. Other attendees included Lorenzo de' Medici, Girolamo Riario (as Papal representative), Lodovico Gonzaga (of Mantua) and the Cardinal of Mantua. On 4 October 1484, he was nominated again as ambassador to Milan. In 1485, Rucellai was elected as *gonfaloniere di giustizia* for July and August 1485, but he could not have occupied the post as he did not return to Florence before October 1485. Rucellai was nominated as ambassador to Venice in early January 1486, but served as a member of the *Dieci della balia* three months later, in March. In September of that same year, he was nominated as permanent ambassador to Naples and traveled there from 10 October until

²⁹⁵ For an overview of this corpus of correspondence see Comanducci, introduction to *Il carteggio*, xiv-xxxviii.

²⁹⁶ Rubinstein, *The government of Florence*, 204-223.

²⁹⁷ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magliebechiano, CXXVI, 83, f. 14.

the end of the month with stops in Perugia and Rome. He returned to Florence in August 1487. During this early stage of his life, Bernardo Rucellai acquired fruitful contacts and experience among the ruling classes of the Italian peninsula.

From 1487 to 1492, Rucellai was, comparatively, uninvolved in Florentine politics and foreign policy. This appears to have been a period of literary productivity during which he composed three works: *Il trionfo della calunnia* and *travestimento latino dei Commentari* di Neri Capponi and *De bello pisano*.²⁹⁸ Rucellai's expertise was nevertheless called upon on 13 August 1490, when he was elected as one of twenty-one citizens tasked with reforming the *Monte di commune* (a collection of bonds issued by the government to raise capital and taxes that were also bought and sold for profit on an open, fluctuating market as they provided a guaranteed return).²⁹⁹ He was given especial control over the salt gabelle.³⁰⁰ His involvement in the reforms that served to bolster de' Medici control of Florence demonstrates that he was a reliable supporter of Medici influence and was considered an effective governor capable of envisioning and enacting reforms that would affect Florentines.

Lorenzo de' Medici died on 9 April 1492 and his young son, Piero, set out to take up his father's role as the leading figure in Florentine politics. Bernardo Rucellai had been an intimate of *il Magnifico* throughout his life and was relied on for his tact and acumen in both ambassadorial tasks as well as domestic governance; However, despite their close

²⁹⁸ On Rucellai's literary production, see below pg. 119

²⁹⁹ There is no single study of the Monte Comune, but see A. Molho, *Florentine Public Finances in the Early Renaissance, 1400-1433* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1971) and L. F. Marks, "The development of the institutions of public finance at Florence during the last sixty years of the Republic, cc. 1470-1530," (PhD diss. Oxford, 1954).

³⁰⁰ Florence, Archivio di Stato, Cento 3, ff. 2r, 50r; *Ibid.*, Balie 39, f. 9r cited in Alison Brown, "Public and Private Interest: Lorenzo, the Monte, and the Seventeen Reformers," in *Lorenzo de' Medici, Studi*, ed. G. C. Garfagnini (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1992), 103-165.

relationship, it would be wrong to consider Bernardo Rucellai as an uncritical advocate for Medici interests. Francesco Guicciardini tells us in his *History of Florence* that

In the days of Lorenzo, who was his brother-in-law, he [Bernardo] enjoyed great credit and reputation; nevertheless, he impatiently began to criticize Lorenzo's actions--not publicly, of course, but with a few people and often enough so that Lorenzo heard about it and was very displeased. Still, Lorenzo tolerated him because he loved him very much and because he was his brother-in-law.³⁰¹

At first, Piero de' Medici sought and depended upon the advice of his uncle. Guicciardini provides a long account the degradation of the relationship between Piero and Bernardo Rucellai in chapter ten of *The Florentine Histories*:

With the power of his father transferred to, or rather perpetuated in Piero, it seemed at first that he would take counsel with the friends of his father and of the state, just as Lorenzo was said to have advised him to do from his deathbed. Bernardo Rucellai and Paolantonio Soderini, who was [Piero's second-cousin (being the son of his grandmother's sister)] had been employed very frequently by Lorenzo, but always with the same reservations he felt toward anyone who seemed capable of enjoying considerable reputation in the city without his support. I believe these two men had no intention of removing Piero from power. They did get together, though, to try to modify or eliminate completely some things that the citizens had found burdensome in Lorenzo's time--things which Bernardo Rucellai had criticized even while Lorenzo was alive. They urged Piero to use his authority moderately, and, inasmuch as it was compatible with his position, to move toward a genuinely republican order rather than continue doing those things that smacked of tyranny and caused hostility toward Lorenzo among so many citizens. They tried to show him that the favor and benevolence he would gain thereby would in fact heighten his power. ... [I]t became clearer every day that [Piero's] nature was tyrannical and haughty. ... Piero not only ignored the advice of Bernardo and Paolantonio, but began to also slight them, for he had become mistrustful. When they noticed this, they did not proceed as wisely as they should have. In fact, soon afterward they contracted marriage alliances between their families and the Strozzi, but only told Piero about them after they were done. Bernardo betrothed a young daughter of his to Filippo Strozzi's son Lorenzo, who was still a little boy.³⁰²

³⁰¹ Guicciardini, *The History of Florence*, trans. Domandi, XXVI, 258.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, X, 80-1.

In marrying his daughter into the Strozzi family, traditional opponents of Medici rule, Bernardo definitively broke with years of collaboration with the head of the de' Medici family.

Bernardo, however, did not turn away entirely from Medici rule, but rather supported the rival and younger familial branch of the de' Medici, represented by Pierfrancesco de' Medici. Guicciardini describes how through his son Cosimo, Bernardo plotted with the sons of Pierfrancesco de' Medici and the duke of Milan. But the result was that Pierfrancesco's sons were arrested, Cosimo was banned as a rebel, and Bernardo, though allowed to remain in Florence, was in great danger and under great suspicion.³⁰³ Cosimo was banished to the countryside around Prato on 30 June 1494.³⁰⁴ Relations between Bernardo Rucellai and his nephew, Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici, may have started off positively, but by November 1494 a definitive breach had occurred and it is thus not surprising that as revolution was fermenting in Florence, Bernardo Rucellai supported the expulsion of his nephew.

From November 1494 to 1502, Bernardo Rucellai was again a prominent Florentine political figure whose views and counsel both as a government official and as a private citizen were heeded. Despite a rhetoric of *governo popolare*, the Florentine ruling group remained relatively consistent after the expulsion of Piero de' Medici and the governmental reform of December 1494. Old magnate families that had been deprived of civic participation by the de' Medici system of controlling government posts were reintegrated into the political class and the greatest change in the political composition of

³⁰³*Ibid.*, XXVI, 259.

³⁰⁴Parenti, *Storia fiorentina*, vol. 1, 82.

the Florentine Republic was the equalisation of all members of the office-holding class.³⁰⁵ Nevertheless, as the leading member of a family with forty-nine members in the *Consigliomaggiore* of 1508 and years of practical experience in governing and diplomacy, Bernardo Rucellai remained one of the political elite.³⁰⁶

Bernardo Rucellai was integral to Florentine foreign policy during the first tumultuous weeks following the expulsion of his nephew, Piero de' Medici. His diplomatic skills were called upon in November 1494 when he was selected to travel secretly to Milan to announce the French terms with respect to Florence and the Florentine territories to Ludovico Sforza.³⁰⁷ Rucellai served as ambassador to Charles VIII again in March 1495 while the latter was in Naples after his successful assault on the Aragonese. He was selected for a diplomatic post to the Emperor Maximilian in November 1496, but never left Florence because of illness.³⁰⁸ Instead, he directed his considerable energies towards problems of domestic governance.

This was also the period of the ascendancy of the Dominican preacher Savonarola. Although Savonarola had been in Florence on numerous occasions before 1494, it was only when the preacher's prophetic vision of a barbarian invasion was seemingly confirmed by the impending French siege that Savonarola entered the Florentine political scene.³⁰⁹ Bernardo Rucellai would have known Savonarola relatively well; he counselled the firebrand to temper his sermons in 1491.³¹⁰ They were sent together to negotiate with Charles VIII in November 1494. The friar's success in avoiding

³⁰⁵ Cooper, "The Florentine Ruling Group," 69-107.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 130-148.

³⁰⁷ Guicciardini, *The history of Florence*, XII, 99; Parenti, *Storia fiorentina*, vol. 1, 141.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 58.

³⁰⁹ Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence*, 66-77.

³¹⁰ Pasquale Villari, *Life and Times of Girolamo Savonarola*, trans. Linda Villari (New York: Haskell Publishing, 1969) I, 139, n. 2.

the destruction of Florence had been an integral element of his rising influence in Florence.

Charles VIII left the Florentine countryside for Rome on 28 November 1494 and the Florentines were left with the arduous task of restructuring a government long subject to Medici dominance. On 30 November a large *pratica* recommended calling a *parlamento* which gathered on 2 December 1494 and abolished the *Cento* and the *Settanta*, the committees through which the Medici exerted influence on Florentine affairs, and authorized the *Signoria* and the guild Colleges to appoint twenty *accoppiatori*, the men responsible for determining who was eligible for political office, including Bernardo Rucellai, tasked with selecting *a mano* the Signoria for the upcoming year. Many of the men, who included Francesco Valori and Piero Capponi, were *ottimati* who had been prominent in Medici governance. Unsurprisingly, the reforms enacted by these governors maintained substantial continuity with the Medici regime and were criticized for not being sufficiently popular.³¹¹

Savonarola and Bernardo Rucellai opposed each other from the outset of the Dominican friar's participation in Florentine political reform. The Dominican delivered a pivotal sermon on 14 December 1494 that urged not only moral and social reform, but also a restructuring of government modeled on the Venetians.³¹² Although the Friar's support of the creation of a Great Council of over 3000 citizens who would have control over taxes, finances and elections assuredly helped bring it about, Rubinstein has warned

³¹¹ Najemy, *The history of Florence*, 381-390; Parenti, *Storia fiorentina*, 147-151; Bartolomeo Cerretani, *Storia fiorentina*, ed. Giuliana Berti (Florence: S. Olschki, 1994), 221-2.

³¹² Girolamo Savonarola, *Trattato circa il reggimento e governo della città di Firenze* in *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, ed. Luigi Firpo (Rome: A. Berladetti, 1965): 209-228.

against overestimating Savonarola's role in the reforms.³¹³ Savonarola's specific proposal for debating constitutional reforms, what John M. Najemy has described as a "city-wide system of grassroots consultation" was not adopted.³¹⁴ Instead, the *Signoria* asked the five existing government committees (the *Signoria* itself, their advisory colleges, the *Venti*, the *Dieci di balia* and the captains of the Guelph Party) to submit plans for debate. The controversy circled around the question of how to select executive offices -- by election or by the drawing of lots. Four of the five plans have survived and all advocated that a large council be created.³¹⁵ On 22 December 1494 the *Signoria* presented a detailed proposal for the creation of a Great Council.³¹⁶

Guicciardini emphasizes elite resistance to the council and identifies Bernardo Rucellai, along with Piero Capponi, as leaders to its opposition.³¹⁷ The twenty *accoppiatori* who had been chosen in December 1494 to select the upcoming year's *Signoria* resigned in June 1495 amidst vehement disapproval for their having elected priors hostile to the Great Council. In the opening to his *De urbe Roma*, Rucellai describes his discontent upon his return from a diplomatic mission to Naples when he learned of the popular nature of the new Florentine government:

The Medici having been expelled and the Republic having been disturbed by arms, the citizens disagreed among themselves concerning how to rearrange the government and with whom power should rest. The reason was that some pursued the power of the few, whereas some preferred to

³¹³ The council's original roster does not survive, but a complete list exists for 1496 when the council had 3452 members. See G. Guidi, "La corrente savonaroliana e la petizione al Papa del 1497," *ASI* 142 (1984), 40; Nicolai Rubinstein, "Savonarola on the Government of Florence," in *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages*, II, 425-438.

³¹⁴ Najemy, *A history of Florence*, 384.

³¹⁵ Guidobaldo Guidi, *Ciò che accadde al tempo della signoria di novembre dicembre in Firenze l'anno 1494* (Florence: Arnaud, 1988), 192-207; Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence*, 256-262.

³¹⁶ Nicolai Rubinstein, "I primi anni dello Consiglio Maggiore di Firenze (1494-99)," in *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Giovanni Capelli II (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2004): 71-132.

³¹⁷ Guicciardini, *History of Florence*, 104-110.

confuse and confound all who were less powerful than themselves. Only then did it happen by means of the ambition of the few such that the city, destroyed by faction, embraced that disorderly, lest I say popular, form of republic.³¹⁸

Bernardo Rucellai did not occupy another official government position until March 1497, although he spoke at over forty *pratiche* between June 1495 and February 1497.³¹⁹ The city during these years was divided and this experience of factionalism thwarting the efforts of governors would deeply impress on Bernardo Rucellai the problems facing effective community leadership. Savonarola's followers, called *frateschi*, supported the preacher's program of moral and social reform in a city ravaged by plague and famine: organized groups of children, referred to as Savonarola's *fanciulli* sought out sodomites and gamblers for persecution from 1495 and 1497, condemned luxuries such as extravagant clothing and jewelry and destroyed objects that catered to pride like mirrors, Whigs and lecherous books in a bonfire in Piazza della Signoria on 16 February 1496.³²⁰ Bernardo Rucellai was among the elite leaders of opponents to Savonarola, the *arrabbiati*, along with Piero Capponi, Tanai de' Nerli, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, Guidantonio Vespucci, Piero Alberti, the Pazzi and some less prestigious families like the Martelli, Giugni, Canacci and Da Diaccetto. The opposition to Savonarola did not share a unified ideological front, but as pressure from Rome continued to rise against the

³¹⁸ Bernardo Rucellai, *De Urbe Roma, seu Latinus Commentarius eisudem in Pub. Victorem, ac Sext. Rufum De regionibus urbis*, in *Supplementum ai Rerum Italicarum Scriptores ab anno aerae Christianae Millesimo ad Millesimum Sexcentisimum*, ed. D. Becucci (Florence, 1770), II, 783 cited in Gilbert, "Bernardo Rucellai," 109 note 1: "Medicibus exactis, armisque turbata Republica, quum de ordinanda civitate, constituendoque imperio cives inter se dissiderent, quod alii paucorum potentiam sectarentur, pars conturbari miscerique omnia quo minus valerent ipsi, mallent, tum demum ambitione paucorum factus est ut civitas distructa seditionibus laxiorem Reipublicae formam, ne dicam popularem, amplecteretur. Haec ego, qui post exactos Medices, legatus abfueram, quum in reditu meo offendissem, non destiti ea cogitare, ac monere, quae ad expoliendam rudem illam ut primam materiem pertinerent."

³¹⁹ Florence, Archivio di Stato, *Consulte e Pratiche*, 62 and 63.

³²⁰ Martines, *Fire in the City*, 111-120; Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence*, 159-184; Najemy, *The History of Florence*, 390-397.

friar's preaching and threats of interdicts and reprisals against Florentine banking interests were made, tension mounted.

In March 1497, Parenti tells us that Bernardo Rucellai was elected as one of twelve magistrates to quell the discord.³²¹ Nevertheless, the tension between opposing factions mounted and only two months later, violent opposition to the *frateschi* emerged as anti-Savonarolan youth gangs, *compagnacci*, disrupted his Ascension Day sermon. On 20 May 1497 Bernardo Rucellai was again elected as one of twelve "peacemakers" who were appointed to represent all factions and settle the unrest.³²² In June 1497, the same month that Pope Alexander VI excommunicated Savonarola, Rucellai agreed to become one of the *Dieci di libertà e pace* again with a mandate to calm the tense situation.

The friar defied the pope's orders and celebrated mass on Christmas 1497 while his ally Paolantonio Soderini sat as *gonfaloniere di giustizia* and was able to protect him from prosecution. He returned to the pulpit for Lent of 1498 when another supporter, Giuliano Salviati, was *gonfaloniere di giustizia*, and preached to huge crowds of men and women in the cathedral. In March-April an anti-Savonarolan *Signoria* held several *pratiche* on the question of whether or not to enforce the prohibition against the Dominican's preaching. Bernardo Rucellai, however, did not participate in those *pratiche* until after Savonarola's downfall on 8 April 1498.

The *Signoria* chose to enforce the papal order and Savonarola retired to San Marco. The conflict was far from resolved, however, as a Franciscan critic of the preacher challenged him to a trial by fire that was scheduled for 7 April, although squabbling as to the rules

³²¹Parenti, *Storia fiorentina*, II, 87-8.

³²²*Ibid.*, 106; A. Brown, "Partiti, correnti, o coalizioni: un contributo al dibattito," in *Savonarole: Enjeux, débats, questions*, ed. Jean-Louis Fournel and M. Plaisance (Paris: Université de la Sorbonne nouvelle, 1997), 67-70; A. Brown, "Ideology and Faction in Savonarolan Florence," in *World of Savonarola*, ed. Stella Fletcher and Christine Shaw (Aldershot and Burlington, VT.: Ashgate, 2000), 28-9. pp. 22-41.

and a sudden storm cancelled the ordeal. The next day, Savonarola's enemies attacked San Marco and then moved on to attack the nearby home of Francesco Valori and murder both him and his wife.³²³ As the mob prepared to attack other *frateschi* leaders, like Paolantonio Soderini, who had collaborated with Rucellai in opposing Piero de' Medici, and Giovanbattista Ridolfi, the *Signoria* sent soldiers to calm the crowd. Rucellai urged the Florentine government at two *pratiche* (9 April 1498 and 27 April 1498) devoted to this issue to be lenient with the *frateschi* even as they prosecuted Savonarola.³²⁴ At this juncture, Bernardo Rucellai was named as an ambassador to Naples, but he declined.³²⁵

At the behest of a *Signoria* that included Bernardo Rucellai, Savonarola was examined, tortured and then condemned as a heretic and schismatic on 23 May in the piazza Signoria and was hanged along with two of his supporters, Domenico da Pescia and Silvestro Maruffi.³²⁶ Further reprisals against the *frateschi* were prevented and although Bernardo Rucellai was influential in the decision to forgive Savonarola's supporters for their involvement in their political, social and moral reforms, his campaign to be named as one of the *Dieci* was unsuccessful.³²⁷

Even with the *piagnoni* defeated, Florence remained exceedingly difficult to govern.³²⁸ Plagued by financial crisis brought on by payments to foreign princes either as war indemnities or for mercenary services rendered,³²⁹ the *Signoria* could raise no revenue from a *Consiglio maggiore* that required a two-thirds majority for legislation to

³²³ Luca Landucci, *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516 continuato da un anonimo al 1542*, ed. Iodoco del Badia (Florence: Sansoni, 1985), 170-171.

³²⁴ Florence, Archivio di Stato, *Consulte e Pratiche*, 64, cc. 70r-70v; *Ibid.*, 64, c. 83r.

³²⁵ Parenti, *Storia fiorentina*, II, 171-2.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 166-7.

³²⁷ Florence, Archivio di Stato, *Consulte e Pratiche* 64, c.83r ; Guicciardini, *The history of Florence*, XVI.

³²⁸ Giorgio Cadoni, *Lotte Politiche e Riforme Istituzionali a Firenze tra il 1494 e eli 1502* (Rome: Archivio Storico Italiano, 1999), esp. 101-180.

³²⁹ L. F. Marks, "La crisi finanziaria a Firenze dal 1494 al 1502," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 112 (1954): 40-72.

pass.³³⁰ Attendance at the *Consiglio maggiore* was so poor that even immediately after the reforms they had to lower the *quorum* to 1000 members in order to function.³³¹ The elite who had opposed Savonarola had expected the demise of the *Consiglio maggiore* with the fall of the friar, but attempts to institute a council of 150-200 elite citizens were met with vehement opposition.

The Archivio di Stato di Firenze records of the *Consulte e Pratiche* are an invaluable resource for the study of Florentine politics during the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries. They are the only records of formal, political institutions that include discussion and debate. Both Felix Gilbert and Nicolai Rubinstein have equated the leading citizens of the regime with the regular members of the *pratiche*, among whom Bernardo Rucellai must be numbered.³³² The *Consulte e Pratiche* shows that Rucellai was often the last interlocutor at a given meeting and always speaks towards the end of the gathering. He attended both in an official capacity, for example as one of the priors who called the *pratiche* on 29 July 1500 together with Piero Soderini and Albizzi, and as a private citizen and the leader of his familial group. He attended 54 meetings in the period between January 1498 and August 1502. The *pratiche* of this period are concerned with financial difficulties, foreign relations, government reform and the campaign against Pisa -- and Bernardo Rucellai was in frequent attendance. His contributions are thoughtful, often seconded by other speakers, and employ medical imagery to diagnose social

³³⁰Cooper, "The Florentine Ruling Group," 91.

³³¹Butters, *Governors and Government*, 35-6; Nicolai Rubinstein, "I primi anni del Consiglio Maggiore di Firenze (1494-1499)," *Archivio Storico Italiano*, CXII (1954), 158-194; Rubinstein, "Politics and Constitution," 176-8.

³³²Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, 65; Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence*, 133; see also Dale V. Kent, "The Florentine *Reggimento* in the Fifteenth-Century," *Renaissance Quarterly* 28:4 (1975), 601-2; Gene Brucker, *The Civic World of Early Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 264-265.

problems as well as a few references to classical history which demonstrate the extent to which historical thought inflected his political behaviour.

Bernardo Rucellai also continued to serve the Florentine Republic as a diplomat. He was sent to Venice with Guidantonio Vespucci on 6 August 1498 in order to argue against Venetian support for Pisa.³³³ Thus, he had first-hand experience of how the condescending attitude of the other international powers towards Florence exacerbated the difficult situation for domestic governance and created what Rosemary Pesman Cooper has described as an “atmosphere of suspicion and recrimination.”³³⁴ In the *pratiche*, when discussing agreements and alliances with other foreign powers, Rucellai explains the problems with foreign policy for republics:

And it so happened that the affairs were conducted with consideration and held in secret because where secrets are not kept there can be no good government; and it is like rapidly pouring water into a vessel that does not hold, etc.³³⁵

In a context where the secrecy of diplomacy and treaties was essential to their efficacy, the broad participation of the Florentine office-holding class in foreign policy proved detrimental to an effective foreign policy.

In the last months of 1498 Bernardo Rucellai was elected as *gonfaloniere di giustizia*, but as Guicciardini tells us in *The History of Florence*, he declined the office citing ill-health. Guicciardini further adds that this refusal to serve damaged his reputation as Rucellai was criticized for being overly ambitious and sought even greater prestige.³³⁶ Nevertheless, in early 1499 he sat as one of the *Dieci di balia* and in April

³³³ Guicciardini, *History of Florence*, XVII; Parenti, *Storia fiorentina*, II, 191.

³³⁴ Cooper, "The Florentine Ruling Group," 105.

³³⁵ Florence, Archivio di Stato, *Consulte e Pratiche*, 65, cc. 205r-205v: “Et subiunxe che le cose si governassino con reputatione et si tenessino secrete, perché dove non si tiene il secreto non può essere buono governo; et è come cettare acqua in uno vaso che non tiene, etc.”

³³⁶ Guicciardini, *History of Florence*, XVII; Parenti, *Storia fiorentina*, II, 203.

spoke eloquently on the advantages and disadvantages of an alliance with the French or the League of Italy to the Great Council.³³⁷ Similar statements can be found in the *pratiche* where he figures as a staunch supporter of the French alliance and frequently calls the King of France "our greatest friend" (*principale amico nostro*).³³⁸

In May 1499 sortition (election by lot) was extended to all political offices, including the *Signoria* and the *Dieci*. Although the political elite continued to control foreign policy and diplomacy, the *popolo* controlled the *Signoria* and the advisory colleges and frequently obstructed *ottimati* objectives. At the same time, the government accused its chief mercenary captain, Paolo Vitteli, of collaborating with foreign powers and sabotaging a Florentine campaign. Members of the political elite were under suspicion for conspiring to prolong the war, impoverish the *popolo* with taxes and create a political crisis that would bring about the return of the Medici.³³⁹

Criticism was launched specifically at Rucellai in August 1500 when, according to Parenti, he was targeted for high-living as a *grandi* while the population of Florence suffered.³⁴⁰ Rucellai's speeches in the *pratiche*, however, demonstrate a concern with the difficult circumstances besetting the people of Florence who were weary (*stracchi*) and resting (*riposati*).³⁴¹ Nevertheless, Rucellai did not desist in his attempts to overcome governmental reforms against the dominance of the *primati*. He advocated an approach that would "arrange" (*ordinare*) the government rather than "change" (*mutare*) it. In September 1500 and with the help of Guidantonio Vespucci and Giovanbatista Ridolfi, he

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 248.

³³⁸ Florence, Archivio di Stato, *Consulte e Pratiche*, 67, c.44r.

³³⁹ Parenti, *Storia fiorentina*, II, 327.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 389.

³⁴¹ Florence, Archivio di Stato, *Consulte e Pratiche*, 66, cc.50v-51r.

guided a *Signoria* to challenge the initiative to limit the power of the political elite.³⁴² In January 1501 Bernardo Rucellai was among twelve *ottimati* who devised a plan to deprive the *Signoria* of legislative authority in important areas and to create a new council composed of the Eighty and another 120 citizens with life tenure.³⁴³ The proposal was still-born as a *pratica* of forty leading citizens was unable to agree on the appointment of a committee to reform the government. The unsuccessful initiative could only have augmented Rucellai's frustration as rule by committee thwarted effective governance.

Heated debate continued among the office-holding class of Florentines over the form of government in their *res publica* until in 1502, a reform was enacted that created a life-long head-of-state position, the *gonfaloniere a vita*, modeled on the Venetian *doge*. Piero Soderini was selected -- in all likelihood because he had been neither a *fratesco* nor an intimate of the Medici yet was still a scion of the Florentine political elite.³⁴⁴ Piero Soderini and Bernardo Rucellai had worked together governing the city in opposition to Savonarola and the *piagnoni* throughout the 1490s. Indeed, they had called a *pratica* together with Luca delli Albizi on 29 July 1500 in order to seek counsel on the siege of Pisa,³⁴⁵ Rucellai opposed his appointment. Guicciardini tells us that "when Piero Soderini, who was his enemy for personal reasons, was elected gonfalonier, Bernardo, in keeping with his usual manner, did not visit him and stopped attending the consultations."³⁴⁶ The election of Soderini to the highest political office in the Florentine government was the

³⁴²Parenti, *Storia fiorentina*, II, 391.

³⁴³Cadoni, *Lotte Politiche*, 141-2.

³⁴⁴Najemy, *History of Florence*, 407.

³⁴⁵Florence, Archivio di Stato, Consulte e Pratiche 66, c. 76v.

³⁴⁶Guicciardini, *The History of Florence*, XXVI, 260.

proverbial straw that broke the camel's back for Rucellai who had been frustrated by government under the *Consiglio maggiore* since the initial reforms of 1494.

Bernardo Rucellai withdrew from civic participation for ten years in protest. He made himself exempt by not paying his taxes.³⁴⁷ He held no more government posts nor did he attend any *pratiche* for which we have records until 1512. Before retreating from governance, he, however, delivered a telling speech in the *pratica* of 5 July 1502 that diagnosed the problems facing city governors that is worth citing in full.

He said that it seems to him that the city had an ill under which all the wicked are born, and much had come from not treating this adequately from the start. And he said that the government in Venice took 200 years to establish itself and then it is no surprise if we ourselves have made some mistakes. And that he who advises freely sustains the infamy and brings the risk of these [mistakes]; that they don't keep secrets; that the city does not serve its men; the commissars and ambassadors don't travel, or those that go aren't qualified; the money is not made in bulk and somehow it is exploited, because there is no faith in what it can be used for. He [this sort of advisor] is not of the mind to change the status, but to order it that way; and each one states and agrees that this is what must be done; and the artisans and the youth await government orders; and the [circulating] opinion of the bad government causes innumerable disorders; and that the enemies know this reputation; and that the soldiers will take their money and go with God because they don't esteem [the government]; and the King of France himself says that the government should get itself together; and it isn't Valentino saying it, but the King, our greatest friend. It is true that now does not seem the [appropriate] time, but it has been nonetheless seen that prudent doctors give a medicine for the effect of the moon; and the present establishment of this will furnish great renown and will show the city to be united; and that this will be worth more than the equipping of 50 squadrons of horses.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ On remaining *a specchio* as a political protest, see Roslyn Pesman Cooper, 'L'elezione di Pier Soderini,' *Archivio Storico Italiano* 125 (1967), 149-150.

³⁴⁸ Florence, Archivio di Stato, Consulte e Pratiche, 67, cc. 43v-44r (5 July 1502): "confermato quello è stato parlato per chi ha parlato per la pancha dove ha seduto, dixè che a lui pare che la città habbi uno male dal quale naschono tucti e' mali, et quanto è proceduto dal nollo havere preso bene in principio. Et dixè che il governo che è a Vinegia penò 200 anni ad fermarsi, et però non è maraviglia se ci habiamo noi facto qualche errore. Et che chi consiglia liberamente n'ha infamia et portane pericolo; non si tenghano e' secreti; la città non serve delli homini; e' commissarii et imbasciadori non vanno, o vanno chi non è a proposito; e' danari non si fanno in grosso et in modo se ne faccia fructo, perché non ce è fede in sulla quale si possa servire. Lui non è di parere di mutare stato, ma di ordinarlo sì; et ciascuno dice et consente che si debbi fare; et li artigiani et la gioventù aspecta ordine di governo; et la opinione del male governo causa infiniti

In this long piece of oratory, one can hear the frustration of an experienced and well-informed member of the office-holding class who is only too aware of the difficulties of governance. The lack of confidence in the government by both Florentines and outsiders undermines the efficacy of diplomats and alliances. Factionalism divides a ruling class concerned more with its own goods than the good of the community while infamy and rumour run rampant and disrupt effective government. Rucellai argues that a medicine is needed, but of what kind? How can balance be restored in a situation so full of destabilizing components? Rucellai did not speak or write explicitly on this topic, but by turning to his literary production, we can uncover clues as to his proposed solutions to these social ailments.

In addition to his extensive diplomatic and political activities, Rucellai had long been involved in the literary and philosophical movements of the Quattrocento. Bernardo, built upon his father's legacy of civic participation, scholarly erudition and building projects. Florence had long been the site of informal discussion groups, the most famous of which was Ficino's *Academia Platonica*.³⁴⁹ Bernardo participated in the familial

disordini; et che li inimici hanno reputatione; et che e' soldati pigliano e' danari e vannosi con Dio perché non stimano; et il Re di Francia medesimo dice che si rassetti il governo; et non lo dice il Valentino ma il Re, principale amico nostro. É il vero che hora non pare il tempo, ma si è visto anchora prudenti medici danno una medecina in sul fare della luna; et il cimentarlo di presente darà reputatione et monsterrà la città essere unita; et che questo varrà più che il soldare 50 squadroni di cavalli. Né per una cosa si può fare chose che più relevi la città, et con questo anchora fare delle altre provisioni. Et e' Romani ne prelevi la città, et con queso anchora fare delle altre provisioni. Et e' Romani ne' pericoli facevano uno dictare, né si truova facessi mai se non bene; ma non parrebbe già si facessi, perché non è di consuetudine della città; ma darebbe bene auctorità a' X [Dieci]. Et tornò a dire che la Signoria restringha e' Collegi insieme, et delli altri chi paressi, et presto si faccia resolutione di questo modo del governo, etc."

³⁴⁹ The Platonic Academy has been the subject of much discussion over the past twenty years. It seems unlikely that Ficino ever taught in a school-like environment, but rather used the term "Academia" to describe his teaching methods. Nevertheless, the Platonic Academy has become the emblematic for discussion groups among humanists concerned with philosophy and classical learning. On the controversy over the Platonic Academy see Arnaldo della Torre, *Storia dell'Accademia Platonica di Firenze* (Florence: Tip. G. Carnesecchi e figli, 1902); cf. James Hankins, in *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2: 187-217, 2: 219-72, 2: 273-316, 2: 351-95, respectively; cf. Robert Black, "The

tradition of making material contributions to the physical urban landscape in order to support the family's inclusion in the city's political elite and constructed the *Orti Oricellari* in the early 1490s.³⁵⁰ After Lorenzo de' Medici's death in 1492, Rucellai hosted regular gatherings in his newly-constructed gardens on Via Della Scala, the *Orti Oricellari*, for the discussion of literary, philosophical and political topics.³⁵¹

Bernardo was a companion of Lorenzo de' Medici's at the University in Pisa where Marsilio Ficino taught the youthful elite of Florence.³⁵² Giovanni Corsi, in his biography of Ficino, describes Rucellai as one of the neo-Platonist's closest pupils.³⁵³ Bernardo's interest in the classical world is demonstrated by the subject matter of his extant written works. He wrote one of the first topographical and antiquarian studies of ancient Rome in his *De urbe Roma*, composed between 1500 and 1505. The text shows a familiarity with current sixteenth-century scholarship and its main contribution is on epigraphy.³⁵⁴ The treatise is a response to a small work by Publio Vittore and Sextus Rufus on the areas of the city and has a preface attached to it for a political history that was never written or was since lost. This preface, as we have seen above, recounts Rucellai's reactions to the restructured Florentine government upon his return to Florence from Naples in 1495. The eighteenth-century edition in which it has been preserved also contains a biography of Rucellai.

philosopher and Renaissance culture," *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007), 21-23; Christopher S. Celenza, "The revival of Platonic philosophy," 83.

³⁵⁰Baker, *The Fruit of Liberty*, 12.

³⁵¹See above, chpt. 2. There have been two previous scholarly attempts to reconstruct the content of these discussions, see Gilbert, Bernardo Rucellai," and Cummings, *The Maecenas and the madrigalist*, chpt. 1.

³⁵²Jonathan Davies, "Marsilio Ficino: Lecturer at the Studio fiorentino," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 45 (1992): 785-90.

³⁵³Corsi, *Vita M. Ficini*, XX.

³⁵⁴Rucellai, *De Urbe Roma*, cc. 783-1190.

Bernardo Rucellai's interest in historical writing was not limited to an account of the French invasion of 1494-5. He wrote a Latin reworking of Neri Capponi's *Commentarii* on the Pisan War of 1406 entitled *De bello pisano* that includes some changes and additions to a text that had already been translated into Latin by Matteo Palmieri as *De captivitate Pisana*. This commentary on the siege of Pisa and the heroic defense of the city followed by its fall in 1406 to Florentine troops demonstrates Rucellai's interest in the "Pisan problem" that was the subject of so much division financial strife in Florence from 1494 to 1506.³⁵⁵ Indeed, the Florentine attempts to reconquer Pisa with the help of the King of France are explicitly the topic of discussion in eight of the fifty-four *pratiche* at which Bernardo Rucellai spoke between 1498 and 1502.³⁵⁶ This oration, the earliest of Rucellai's extant works, was written on the occasion of the siege of Città di Castello by Giuliano della Rovere (future Julius II) in 1474.³⁵⁷

Bernardo Rucellai wrote another short history on a war between three Italian city powers: Viscontian Milan against Florence and Bologna in the early fourteenth century in the *Bellum mediolanense*.³⁵⁸ Like the *De bello pisano*, *Bellum Mediolanense* is also a reworking of a Florentine historian, but this time the work of the eminent humanist and chancellor, Leonardo Bruni.

³⁵⁵ Najemy, *A history of Florence, 1200-1575*, 194-200, 402-404; Butters, *Governors and Government*, 83-139.

³⁵⁶ Florence, Archivio di Stato, *Consulte e Pratiche*, 64, cc.15v-16r; 65, cc.110v-111r; 65, cc. 122r; 65, c. 200r; 65, c. 257v; 66, c.61r; 66, c.76v; 66, c.245v. *De bello pisano* was published in 1733 along with a second edition of *De bello italico* by the London printer Bowyer, which also includes *Oratio de Auxilio Tifernatibus adferendo*. Bernardus Oricellarius, *De bello italico commentarius* (London: Bowyer, 1733), 1-48. Pagination restarts after the *De bello italico*.

³⁵⁷ Shaw, *Julius II: The Warrior Pope*, 19-25.

³⁵⁸ It has been printed in the appendix to Guglielmo Pellegrini's 1921 monograph *L'umanista Bernardo Rucellai e le sue opere storiche* and exists in a single, likely autograph, manuscript copy in the Magliabechianacollection at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magliabechiana XXV 636, cc.106r-116r.

Bernardo Rucellai did not write only on serious, historical matters. Like the other members of the *Orti Oricellari*, he was interested and participated in more than one genre of literary production. He is the author of a carnivalesque song, “Il trionfo della calunnia,” inspired by Lucian of Samosata’s “non bisogna prestar fede facilmente alla callunia” and available in a modern edition edited by Charles S. Singleton.³⁵⁹

While hosting intellectual gatherings in his gardens, Bernardo Rucellai further maintained a lively correspondence with other great men of his age, such as the famed Neapolitan humanist Giovanni Pontano whom he had met in 1496 while in Naples on a diplomatic mission. Rita Maria Comanducci has catalogued 105 pieces of correspondence written by both prominent Florentine political figures such as Piero Capponi and Tommaso Ridolfi and Italian humanists such as Marsilio Ficino, that mention Bernardo Rucellai between 1456 and 1506.³⁶⁰

Bernardo Rucellai left Florence in 1506 with his eldest son, Giovanni. His departure was most likely precipitated by his involvement in the marriage arrangements between Piero de' Medici's daughter, Clarice, and Filippo Strozzi; a marriage which the Florentine government interpreted as a challenge to their continued authority because it meant the reintroduction of a member of the expelled Medici into the city and provided the Medici and their supporters with an entry-point for orchestrating a return to power.³⁶¹ They spent the summer of 1506 in Avignon at the Strozzi palace before moving on to Marseilles. After a yearlong sojourn in France, Rucellai returned to Italy. A letter he wrote to the Florentine Chancery reports that he was forced to stop at Milan, Bologna and

³⁵⁹ Bernardo Rucellai, “Il trionfo della callunia,” in *Canti carnascialeschi del Rinascimento*, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Bari: J. Laterza, 1936): 214-5.

³⁶⁰ Comanducci, Appendix I in *Il carteggio di Bernardo Rucellai*, 67-72.

³⁶¹ Najemy, *History of Florence*, 416-7; Gilbert, Bernardo Rucellai, 110.

eventually settle for a while in Venice in order to avoid an outbreak of the plague.³⁶² We do not know exactly how long Bernardo stayed in Venice (or elsewhere), but by 1511 he had returned to his native city.³⁶³

The Orti participants were collaborators of Rucellai's in the government of Florence although not always political allies. Giovanni Canacci, Piero Martelli and Diacetto were also anti-Savonarolans, but Parenti tells us of a conflict between Rucellai and Guiglielmo de Pazzi, the bishop of Arezzo, in May 1499 over *popolani* political participation.³⁶⁴ The conflicting political views of the Orti participants implies that the gatherings were not mere events of self-congratulation and self-affirmation, but rather places of real debate. As Felix Gilbert has pointed out, this was in contrast to the earlier generation of Florentine humanists who “hardly ever took part at a policy-making level.”³⁶⁵

The political climate in Florence had undergone drastic changes during Rucellai's five-year absence. The government led by Soderini, which Rucellai had shunned, had been seriously undermined by the machinations of Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici (later Pope Leo X). As had been feared by the Florentine government, the Medici-Strozzi marriage was a key step in the Medici return. Rucellai's involvement in the negotiations demonstrates his continued interest in political affairs even after his withdrawal from active participation in civic government in 1502 and his continued support of aristocratic rule even after having helped expel his nephew, Piero.

³⁶² Florence, Archivio di Stato, Signori Responsive. Lettere Esterne alla Signoria del 1508 da Gennaio a Dicembre, ff. 55-56.

³⁶³ Florence, Archivio di Stato, Signori, Responsive. Oratori, 31, cc. 255r-256v. Reprinted in Comanducci, *Il carteggio*, xxxvii-xxxviii.

³⁶⁴ Parenti, *Storia fiorentina*, II, 260-1.

³⁶⁵ Gilbert, “Bernardo Rucellai,” 127.

Pope Julius II launched an assault to expel the forces of Louis XII from Italy in 1512. Soderini's continued support of the French alliance led to his government's downfall as the opposing bloc of the Emperor, Spain and the Papacy threatened Florence with sack again.³⁶⁶ Bernardo's son, Giovanni, played a leading role in the events that brought the Medici back to power that same year and Bernardo was named (again) as one of the twenty citizens charged with reforming the Florentine constitution.³⁶⁷ He served on a number of councils and committees tasked with reform of the government as well as holding positions of executive power. He sat on the *Medicibalia* in September 1512, sat on another council of reform with seventeen other Medici supporters on 31 March 1513 and on the resurrected *Settanta* in November 1513.

Bernardo Rucellai died two years later at the age of sixty-seven having witnessed and taken a prominent role in three different political regimes as both legislator and ambassador while maintaining close relationships with the leading intellectuals of his day. His extensive diplomatic experience is evident in the vision of Italy he offered in *De bello italico*.

Content and Scope of *De bello italico*

Written between 1498 and 1512, *De bello italico* presents in Sallustian Latin a substantive account of Charles VIII's 1494-1495 Italian War, and discusses the main political and military events in Italy of the period with a bias towards Florentine affairs.³⁶⁸ The exact date of this work's composition is unclear, but it certainly

³⁶⁶ Najemy, *History of Florence*, 412-8.

³⁶⁷ Pellegrini, *L'umanista Bernardo Rucellai*, 21.

³⁶⁸ The 2011 *De bello italico commentarius* edited by Donatella Coppini and published by Casalinga is 138 pages long in a bilingual facing-page edition. The 1723 edition published by Bowyer and Bowyer was 108 pages long. I have yet to consult manuscript copies, of which two survive from the sixteenth century: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. LXVIII 25 and Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magliabechiano XXV 168. On the basis of the Magliabecchiana copy, the first printed edition was

overlapped with Rucellai's withdrawal from civic government and his exile from Florence (1502-1512).³⁶⁹

The title of Rucellai's *De bello italico* evokes two immediate contexts. The first three words of the title evoke Leonardo Bruni's *De bello italico adversus gothos*, an account of the Roman Emperors' war against the Goths in antiquity. Here, Rucellai implies that his text will delineate a tale of culture against barbarism. The shared heritage of the Italian peoples who occupy the same geographic space as the Roman Empire takes centre stage from the beginning of the text. Second, as a commentary this work would be expected to discuss political uprisings that emphasise the disastrous consequences of political conspiracy and factionalism.³⁷⁰

De bello italico opens with fourteen paragraphs of introductory material to frame the context in which Charles VIII's Italian campaign ought to be understood. This introductory material consists of three components: (1) a *proemio* that defines the work and its scope; (2) a summary of the argument of the monograph; (3) and a description of the political situation in Italy on the eve of the invasion. From the outset of the text,

published in 1724 by the London printing house Bowyer and Sons. This same printing firm issued a second edition with extended prefatory material in 1733. I rely on Coppini for my Latin citations. All English translations are mine.

³⁶⁹ Felix Gilbert believed that the manuscript was probably completed by 1506 on the basis of a letter to Francesco Diacetto written from Marseille in which Bernardo Rucellai asks his good friend and fellow participant in the Orti gatherings to read and critique a passage on the Battle of Fornovo which appears in the latter portion of the text. Another reason for asserting that *De bello italico* was likely nearing completion before Bernardo Rucellai's return to Florence in 1512 is that while in Venice in 1508, Rucellai had the famed Dutch humanist Erasmus take a look at the text. Donatella Coppini, however, has recently argued in her 2012 Latin-Italian edition of the text for a more extended timeline for completion. She agrees with Gilbert that *De bello italico* was probably a project first conceived in 1495 -- immediately following the events narrated -- when Rucellai was in Naples and discussed the appropriate style, scope and models for historical writing with Giovanni Pontano. Coppini argues that *De bello italico* was likely a work-in-progress well into the 1510s and she casts some doubt on the claim that it was ever completed before Rucellai's death in 1514.

³⁷⁰ Humanists such as Angelo Poliziano and Leon Battista Alberti had composed commentaries on contemporary political uprisings that illustrate similar themes. Angelo Poliziano, *Della congiura dei Pazzi (Coniurationis commentarium)*, ed. Alessandro Perosa (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1958); Leon Battista Alberti, *Commentarius de coniuratione Porcaria*, ed. L. Mehus, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptorum*, ed. L. A. Muratori (Milan: Typographia societatis Palatinae, 1751) 25, 293-369.

historical causation is presented as complex and multi-faceted with no simple explanation offered as to why the Italian Wars began.³⁷¹

The narrative of the French invasion itself begins with a description of Charles VIII and his preparations for the invasion and follows the French monarch and his forces on their march to Naples and their subsequent retreat following the establishment of the Holy League. *De bello italico* recounts the various military conflicts, both naval and land, fought during the campaign as well as the diplomatic negotiations accompanying the advance. The only battle, however, for which tactical manoeuvres are detailed is the centrepiece of the text, the Battle of Fornovo [6 June 1495].

The text, however, does not end with the retreat of French troops from Italy. Instead, the focus of the text shifts to a discussion of Louis d'Orleans's campaign in Lombardy, which Louis sought to occupy as a position from which to conquer Milan. Louis XII's ambitions in Italy would reopen the Italian Wars before the completion of *De bello italico* and the conflict between France and the various Italian powers was still ongoing as Rucellai composed the text. At this juncture, Rucellai informs the reader that Charles has departed Italy for France and summarizes his well-intended character and monstrous physical attributes.³⁷²

With the departure of the King of France from the peninsula, the narrative turns to events in Naples and, after recounting how Alfonso wrested control over the Kingdom of Naples from French forces, skips ahead in time to the death of Charles VIII [7 April

³⁷¹ Accordingly, the text outlines the momentous deaths of Lorenzo de' Medici and Ferdinand of Aragon; the election of Rodrigo Borgia as Pope Alexander VI and his failed attempts at reconciliation with Alfonso of Aragon; Alexander VI's invitation to Charles VIII to enter Italy and King Alfonso of Naples war plans against Ludovico Sforza; Ludovico Sforza's usurpation of Gian Galeazzo Sforza as *de facto* ruler of Milan; Alfonso's plans against Ludovico and Alfonso's secret alliance with Piero de' Medici; the Pope's change of allegiance at a meeting with Alfonso at Vicovaro; diplomatic relations between Piero de' Medici and Ludovico Sforza and the latter's decision to invite Charles VIII of France into Italy.

³⁷² These passages in the text are the subject of extended discussion in chapter five, see pp. ??? below.

1498] and the succession of Louis d'Orleans with his ambitions to take over the Duchy of Milan. Ludovico Sforza finds himself without allies. Rather than end with Charles' retreat, *De bello italico* goes on to recount how Ferrantino regained control of Naples and how Ludovico Sforza found himself in a precarious position in Milan. The French King's death at the age of twenty-nine "with the wars still raging in Italy" serves as a transition to the author's closing remarks.³⁷³ The princes' powers have been undermined and the future is not promising. A (fictitious) speech offered by Louis XII provides a parable as the lesson to be learned from these events:

Serpents of diverse kind, during that time of year when they became listless by exceeding cold, as nature is shrewd with respect to their health, had crept into a stack of hay nearby and hid themselves deep within, where they might be safe from the violence of the cold. Perhaps owing to fortune, it happened that the neglect of a neighbour attending to his affairs caused a fire to be set and swiftly kindled by the dry straw. As the fire spread more broadly, the serpents, numb as they were, had not previously sensed how the fire must pass right through their surrounded group, were they to attempt to avoid it. Hence, for those who hurried their flight and who possessed many heads, which is to say the manifold race of serpents, their thoughts were many, and disconnected. But the one, who happened to possess one single head, because his thinking was unitary, fled right away. The others, while they disagreed with each other owing to their manifold heads, became interwoven and perished. These matters having been expounded, [we may say that] there occurred a great upheaval of spirits, as men now trust in the auspices of one rather than being delayed by the caprices and distracted thoughts of so many princes.³⁷⁴

³⁷³ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, par. 150: "Bello in Italia exardescente, Carolus in Gallia apoplexia moritur, annum agens nonum et vigesimum."

³⁷⁴ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Par. 152: "Serpentes varii generis pro anni tempore cum nimio algore torpescerent, ut est natura sagax ad salutem sui, foeni acervum, qui in propinquo erat, irrepserunt, condidereque se ad intimum foeniculi, quo a vi frigoris tutiores essent. Forte fortuna accidit, ut incuria accolae, cujus res agebatur, admoveretur ignis, incendiumque raptim stramento arido excitaretur: quod pervagatum latius rigentes illi non prius praesensere, quam continenter circumdatum pertransiri oportuit, si evadere adniterentur; unde festinantibus fugam, quibus plura capita fuere, ut est multiplex serpentum genus, plures distractaeque fuere sententiae. Cui vero contigit unicum habere caput, quod una sententia fuit, confestim aufugit: caeteri, dum multiplici capite dissentiant implicanturque, interiire. His expositis summa animorum commutatio facta; dum magis unius auspiciis confidunt, quam tot principum studiis distractisque sententiis deterrentur."

The Italian people, like the snakes who were hibernating, had been ignorant of the danger rapidly approaching. At the last moment, when they were unable to come to a consensus about how to act in response to the threat, they demonstrated the frailty of cooperative political systems. The sovereign rule of one was justified, to some, by the disaster of the Italian Wars. Louis XII, of course, would invade the Italian peninsula anew before the end of the decade. For Rucellai, the united effort of the Italian armies had demonstrated the potential of cooperative action, but cooperation between the city-states had not lasted.

Thus, the narrative arc of *De bello italico* can be summarized rather succinctly: Not too long ago, the leading members of the Italian city-states worked together to stabilize the political situation and create a balance among their respective powers. Their descendants, however, were so overcome with greed that they brought about a series of disasters at the hands of the "Gauls." When they were able to recognize their common cause and join forces in removing the foreigner from their lands, they were successful. Threatened again with foreign invasion, the Italian states had to come to the realisation that unity is strength, lest they come to a dire end.

Chapter Five: Bernardo Rucellai's *De bello italico*

In a letter addressed to his good friend Bernardo Rucellai, Bartolommeo della Fonte argues that writing history requires choosing a style and speech with care, so as to reflect the importance of its subject matter. After all, the role of the historian, as opposed to that of the poet or the orator, is to instruct.³⁷⁵ But insofar as history entails tracing the relationships between different events and phenomena, the historian is also like a doctor.³⁷⁶ Indeed, della Fonte concludes his epistle with a summation and an exhortation to the historian of the Italian Wars that explicitly compares him to a physician:

Knowledge of the deeds of famous nations and great princes, and all the ages of the past, though it is appropriate to all of them [the disciplines], is the special province of the historian, whose further task is to give splendid descriptions of regions, places, battles, intersperse rallying speeches and public meetings, to narrate truly and faithfully the causes of things, the accompanying deliberations, what was said or done or happened, and to praise or criticize persons without favouritism, hatred, hope, or fear, and never to depart from the truth, the cover up nothing, lie about nothing, make nothing up. ... Farewell, and do not permit the eloquence which has flourished in our city for so many centuries to continue to wither away, for if in its frail state it is not attended to quickly, it will soon be at death's door. I do not see that anyone could accomplish this better than you, with all the authority and judgment of an outstanding physician.³⁷⁷

Rucellai's judgment, della Fonte says, is so sound that he can surpass the other writers of his age and even match the excellence of the classical historians.³⁷⁸ This exchange between the two members of the Orti group alerts us to the importance of examining the construction of *De bello italico*, with particular attention to its aims and its goals, as well as to the implications of the comparison between the historian and the medical practitioner for early modern people.

³⁷⁵ Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, III, 12: 11.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 12: 15.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, III, 12: 15-17.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, III, 12: 17.

The experience of the Italian Wars, as we have already discussed in chapter one, posed a challenge to Renaissance historians and politicians working within traditional models. Historians had to come to terms with the fact that classical tropes strained to portray and make intelligible the violence and complex political machinations that accompanied the French invasion of the Italian peninsula. Politicians, for their part, felt the shortcoming of their training, rooted as it was in the experience of Italian inter-state politics and classical histories, the lessons of which proved insufficient to navigate the increasingly complex reality of their times. This chapter will show that Bernardo Rucellai was aware of this two-fold problem and examine his proposed remedies.

De bello italico's narrative reflects its author's awareness of the limitations of traditional paradigms governing both historical writing and political theory, as well as his acknowledgement of the need for a better diagnosis of the ailment afflicting Italy as a community. The material or building blocks he used in his account foreground the limits of moral, characterological explanations of history and the plight of poorer members of society. Structurally, the architecture of the work challenges the reader to keep track of events, in the same way that the political actors featuring in its narrative frantically seek to gather intelligence. Stylistically, Rucellai's diction and vivid descriptions bring both the ancient glories of the Roman past and the horrors of the Italian Wars 'before the very eyes of the readers,' to adopt Rucellai's own terminology. These three elements suggest that while Rucellai's *De bello italico* engages with classical and humanist historiography, he also experiments with something new.

Rucellai's innovation was to propose a shift in historical writing that would at once address the shortcomings of traditional modes of historical writing as well as offer political benefits, and thus a possible remedy for the ailments afflicting the Italian peninsula. On the political level, *De bello italico* showed that strong, decisive leadership, concerned with the well-being of all and combined with the resolution of factional differences amongst the community, would give the Italian peninsula its best chance of maintaining its autonomy and avoiding further carnage. Rucellai's complex, evocative narrative devotes attention not only to the governing side of the story, but also to the experience of the governed communities. War is not glorified in his account and maintaining peace, in his opinion, necessitates that a group of rulers take into account the conflicting interests of various constituent groups, and work to keep them in balance. By the same token, Rucellai demonstrates the folly of mixing the sacred and the profane, and the dire consequences of poor leadership. As an historian, he adopts what we might call a more "realistic" stance than his forbears, downplaying classical ideals and classical exemplary theory to better account for the causal complexity and violence of temporal affairs. This was a step towards the kind of historical approach that made Machiavelli and Guicciardini renowned as the first theorists of *Realpolitik*.

De bello italico demonstrates skepticism towards both the maintenance of the autonomy of the Italian city-states and the political utility of historical learning.

Rucellai's depiction of Italian leaders calls into question their ability to rise to the challenge of balancing their interests to maintain peace. Furthermore, as we saw in the previous chapter, he ends *De bello italico* with a parable that speaks to the continued fragmentation and vulnerability of the Italian city-states. Historical exempla, for their

part, fail outright to persuade in the narration of Florentine negotiations with Charles VIII at Sarzana in October 1494. These doubts perhaps explain Rucellai's decision to refrain from sharing his history with a wider audience by publishing it.

Let us first, then, examine the nature of the political community, the history of which is the subject of *De bello italico*, before turning to the nature of political leadership and the construction of Rucellai's narrative itself. Rucellai uses the first-person plural form only four times in the text. Two of these occur in direct speech and therefore need not concern us. The other two instances, however, occur in the context of direct address to the reader, and demonstrate an attempt to bring the reader into a community sharing in the calamities of the Italian Wars.

Rucellai opens his narrative with a section of direct address to his readers outlining his goals in writing *De bello italico* (more on this later). Describing the vast gulf between the classical world and his own times, Rucellai states: "But we, who have arrived in that wicked era of humankind ... when cruel empires, wicked and criminal actions, wars, destruction and massacres are observed, are to be pitied."³⁷⁹ In this way, from the very outset of the text, the reader of these political and military events is exhorted to identify with and share in the trauma felt by the peoples of the Italian peninsula.

Despite a somewhat overtly Florentine focus (some thirty-one out of 153 paragraphs are related to Florentine politics), Rucellai, unlike Bartolommeo della Fonte in his *Annales*, refrains from using the first-person plural to describe the inhabitants of

³⁷⁹Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Para 1, 23-26: "Nobis autem, qui malo humani generis in ea saecula devenimus quibus omnia iuradivina atque humana permiscetur, unde secuta imperia saeva, scelestas, facinorosa bella, excidia, strages, miserendum est. ..."

Florence. There is one exception to describe how “we [the Florentines] were the most miserable of men of the age as we saw our city about to be burned by a barbarian army.”³⁸⁰ Even in this instance, the first-person plural is used to signify a community brought together by their sharing in an emotional response to disaster. In all other instances, the Florentines appear in the third-person plural.

De bello italico offers a wider scope than merely the Florentine involvement in the Italian Wars of 1494-5; it includes the political machinations and battles of all the major players on the Italian peninsula. In the sixteenth-century, Italy, of course, was no more a political unit than Christendom, yet writers like Rucellai and Guicciardini wrote contemporary narratives that used not only the geographic area of Italy, but also the adjectival form.³⁸¹ We must look both to the text and to the intellectual context of the early sixteenth century in order to uncover Rucellai’s conception of *Italia*.

The words ‘Italy’ and ‘Italian’ occur thirty-four times in the commentary for an average of once every three pages. Many of these occurrences, at first glance, refer simply to a geographic unit. The very first mention of Italy has such a referent: “Charles himself, with great wealth and pomp, crossed the Alps into Italy for war.”³⁸² However, in other instances, *De bello italico* instead provides the specifics of locality, referring explicitly to the Veneto, the Po, Lombardy, Liguria and Campania as distinct regions. By *not* saying Charles crossed the Alps into Lombardy, Rucellai unites all the Italian peoples into a single group against whom French aggression is directed. From the very outset, and

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Para 65, 17-19: “Hic mihi, extra legem historiae, deplorare statum civitatis liceat, cum iam prope adesset ut, miserrimi omnium quos haec aetas tulerit, videremus ab hoste barbaro urbem inflammari. ...”

³⁸¹ Riccardo Fubini, “L’idea di Italia fra Quattro e Cinquecento. Politica, geografia storica, miti delle origini,” *Politica e pensiero politico nell’Italia del Rinascimento: Dallo stato territoriale al Machiavelli* (Florence: Edifir, 2009): 123-142.

³⁸² Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Para. 2: “Adventum Caroli regis in Italiam, post ducentimum annum quam barbarus hostis, et ipse magnis copiis magnoque ad bellum apparatu, Alpes transcendit, scribere aggredior.”

even in its most mundane form, Rucellai uses *Italia* as a concept to emphasise the common danger for all the Italian peoples. The term emphasises the shared nature of the Italian Wars even though it was felt by communities with different political customs and heritages.

De bello italico's depiction of political community is intimately and metaphorically bound up in a Galenic interpretation of the human body. Galen of Pergamon was a second century physician and philosopher whose writings served as the framework of Western understandings of medicine throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.³⁸³ His influence reached far beyond the realm of medicine and anatomy, however, since its foundations in Aristotelian natural philosophy made it a useful lens through which to explain the structure of change in the world. The human body, like everything else in the terrestrial sphere, was understood as being composed of four distinct elements (air, water, fire and earth) resulting from the combination of four qualities (hot-wet, wet-cold, hot-dry and cold-dry). The Renaissance understanding of the cosmos drew analogies between the microcosm (the human body) and the macrocosm (the world), conceiving of the health (*sanitas*) of the body as state of balance between four humours, each of which corresponded to one of the elements: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. The humours were understood to be in a state of constant flux while diseases and corruption were the result of an imbalance. Since each individual had a unique temperament, a physician's task consisted in observing and monitoring the symptoms of a disease, diagnosing the particular kind of humoral imbalance that caused their symptoms, and tailoring remedies to his patient's specific constitution. Humoral

³⁸³ Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, 2nd. ed (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), esp. 207-254.

balance, of course, could not be maintained forever. Even with the help of a diligent physician, prolonging life through artificial means had its limits, decay was inevitable in the long-run.³⁸⁴

The conceptual leap from the body to the body-politic was a natural one in the pre-modern era. Scholarship has well examined how this expressed hierarchical relationships between community and rulers. For instance, the doctrine of the king's two bodies, so well examined by Ernst H. Kantorowicz, illustrates the extent to which the pre-modern understanding of the well-being of the community was envisioned through the use of a bodily metaphor where the health of king paralleled the longevity of the polity.³⁸⁵ Scholars have likewise observed another example of this phenomenon in the work of John of Salisbury, who famously rearticulated Plato and Plutarch's analogy between the organisation of "the republic" and the structure and function of all bodily organs under the rule of the soul (Church) and head (king).³⁸⁶ Less emphasised in the literature are the humoral implications of the pre-modern use of the micro-macrocosm analogy. In addition to focussing on hierarchy, scholars would do well to follow the lead of Nicole Hochner whose work on French political thought of the sixteenth-century investigates the implications of a physiological, humoral metaphor as opposed to a discourse of organs

³⁸⁴ And I may add cheekily here that the run was not that long for most people. Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An introduction to knowledge and practice* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1990), esp. 1-16; Vivian Nutton, "Medicine in Medieval Western Europe, 1000-1500," in *The Western Medical Tradition, 800 BC to AD 1800*, vol. 1, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad, et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995): 175-198.

³⁸⁵ Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1957).

³⁸⁶ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus: of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*, ed. And trans. Cary J. Nederman (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), V, 2, 66-68.

and members for social mobility.³⁸⁷ In addition to focussing on hierarchy, scholars should consider the other valences of the metaphor.

Rucellai explicitly describes a political group as a “body (*corpus*)” on two occasions. When describing the city of Naples, he describes the physical layout of the urban space as a “body” extending along the coastline.³⁸⁸ He describes the Romagna as “the bellybutton of Italy.”³⁸⁹ When discussing how all of Italy was imperiled by the arrival of the French forces, Rucellai explains that “the allies, like members of the same body, were exposed to danger especially where they are weaker.”³⁹⁰ Here, Rucellai explicitly compares independent political units working in cooperation to the human body in order to recount the outbreak of the Italian Wars.

The humoral valence of the body metaphor is present in two elements of the text: the depiction of the governed and the role of the political leader. The blood that courses through our veins, according to Galenic medicine, is not pure humoral blood, but rather a combination of the four humours, of which blood holds the highest concentration. This relationship of constituents parts of a whole sharing in properties yet still remaining distinguishable in their characteristics finds a striking parallel with the relationship between the populations of the Italian city-states within the greater social body of Italy.

The individual city-states remain distinguishable from each other even in their shared Italian-ness. Rucellai notes their differing forms of government and interests.

³⁸⁷ Nicole Hochner, “A Sixteenth-Century Manifesto for Social Mobility or The Body Politic Metaphor in Mutation,” *History of Political Thought* 33:4 (2012): 607-626.

³⁸⁸ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Para 99: “Ceterum corpus urbis extenditur in continentem.”

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Para. 35: “Eo namque veluti umbilicum Italiae omnis belli moles inclinatura videbatur.”

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Para. 13: “Communibus sociis veluti corporis membris his praecipue manere periculum, qui infirmiores essent.”

Venice stands out for her maritime empire and civic harmony.³⁹¹ Differing climates and histories account for the personality traits associated with each city-state. The Genoese are “an inconstant people, avid for change.”³⁹² The Neapolitans are portrayed as easily corrupted by their desire for new things.³⁹³ The Sienese have a history of being actively treacherous.³⁹⁴ The Venetians are avid for both money and power and actively sow discord to better their own situation.³⁹⁵

Even though the city-states remain distinct and distinguishable, the Italians nevertheless share a great deal in *De bello italico*. It is “Italian guile,” in the form of bribes, that piques the greed of French nobles and makes them eager for an invasion in the first place.³⁹⁶ The same phrasing, “*astu italico*” is used again to criticize Charles VIII for not consolidating his gains in Italy.³⁹⁷ Each city shares in a propensity for back-door political machinations. They also share in a Roman heritage, which Rucellai emphasises through his use of classical names and places.³⁹⁸ The French invaders are characterized, in contrast, as violent and ferocious; they are linked instead to their medieval past through

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Para. 3; *Ibid.*, Para. 21.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, Para. 22: “Genuenses, socios atque amicos Mauri, aggredi statuit, gentem mobilem avidamque rerum novarum.”

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, Para. 129: “Neapolitanos ... gentem mobilem novisque rebus studentem.”

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Para. 83: “Rex Senas, validissimum Etruriae oppidum, occupare conatus, ubi intelligit civitatem, iam pridem Gibellinas partes secutam, Maximiliani Caesaris sociam atque amicam, ibi statim praesidio relicto, ne fidem quam Gallo praestiterant mutarent, quod sunt in consiliis capiendis mobiles, Romam pergit.”

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Para. 21: “Nam postquam Respublica adolevit civitasque summa concordia stetit, spe atque animo complexa Italiae imperium, ea semper cura insedit ut alterius incommodo ipsi magni pollentesque fierent existimarentque opportunissimum sibi magno usui futurum siquid accideret quo, integris suis rebus, ceteri Italiae populi agitantur.”

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Para. 31: “Haec per legatum Carolo nuntiata parum apud illum proximosque eius valere, astum italicum gallica avaritia exuperante.”

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Para. 102: “Ita Carolus, spe insulae potiundae destitutus, ad reliqua regni munimenta animum convertit, maioraque in dies agitabat, praemissis in Peloponnesum regulis iam diu e Graecia exactis, qui popularium animos sollicitarent, cum astu italico respicere Galliam ac saluti suae consulere coactus est.”

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Para. 129: “documentoque barbaro foret Italis gentique romanae olim stetisse armis imperium orbis terrarum.”

the use of the term Gaul.³⁹⁹ Indeed, Rucellai describes the French as a “barbarian host” less than ten words into his narrative.⁴⁰⁰

Concerted cooperative action in the face of French aggression is a realisable goal in *De bello italico*. Factional in-fighting needs to be overcome at both the city and peninsular level in order to withstand or repel the onslaught. Venice’s great strength is the “greatest harmony” (*summa concordia*) established in the city.⁴⁰¹ On the eve of the French arrival in October 1494, the Florentines are vulnerable because “no harmony existed” between the citizens.⁴⁰² Upon Charles VIII’s return in 1495, however, conditions have changed and “armed with harmony,” the city successfully frustrates Charles VIII’s hopes for overwhelming Florence.⁴⁰³ Rucellai is explicit about the link between sovereignty and civic harmony: “The fortune of the Florentine people had the harmony of the city as the defense for liberty.”⁴⁰⁴

Similarly, when the varied Italian powers put their individual interests aside and come together to form one army, led by two generals, they are able to force a retreat of the French army at the Battle of Fornovo.⁴⁰⁵ This military confrontation occupies the

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Para. 94: “At Gallus, natura ferox, vehemens...”

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Para. 2: “barbarus hostis.” See Denys Hay, “Italy and Barbarian Europe,” in *Italian Renaissance Studies*, ed. E.F. Jacob (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1960): 48-68.

⁴⁰¹ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Para. 21: “Nam postquam Respublica adolevit civitasque summa concordia stetit.” On the myth of Venice, see Robert Finlay, “The Immortal Republic: The Myth of Venice during the Italian Wars (1494-1530),” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30:4 (1999): 931-944; Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice Triumphant: The Horizons of a Myth*, esp. 183-228.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, Para. 50: “...quae nulla concordia constat...”

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, Para. 78: “Rex igitur, hac spe frustratus, ubi videt neque vi neque dolo opprimere posse civitatem concordia munitam.”

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Para. 79: “Id munimentum libertatis, concordiam civium, fortuna populi florentini habuit.”

⁴⁰⁵ It is worth noting that the bodily metaphor to describe a social group is also employed in the expression “army corps.” *Ibid.*, Para. 103; *Ibid.*, Para. 107-116.

most space in the text, comprising a full nine paragraphs out of the 153 that compose Rucellai's history. Even as the centrepiece of the text, however, this success is a limited one in that Rucellai refrains from declaring a clear victor in the battle and instead emphasises the carnage and equal loss of life on both sides: "the Gaul is almost indistinguishable from the Italian. ... Exhaustion, wounds and the rain weigh down heavy."⁴⁰⁶ The narrative continues for another fifty paragraphs detailing the continued problems facing Italian sovereignty after the retreat of the French forces. The battle may have been won, but the war is far from over.

Although *De bello italico* concludes with a parable that illustrates the vulnerability of an leaderless group, it also contains one piece of evidence suggesting that peoples can come together in a less hierarchically organized manner in order to achieve great military success. Embedded in a brief account of medieval Italian history used by the Florentine diplomats in an attempt to convince Charles VIII to protect Florence, Rucellai describes how the various Germanic tribes were able to invade Rome and plunder her territories.⁴⁰⁷ The Goths, Huns, Vandals, Heruls and Lombards were able to challenge the supremacy of Rome, and thus offer an historical precedent of successful cooperative action without a strong leader.

This is not to say, however, that governance does not play an important role in Rucellai's causal explanations of the Italian Wars. On the contrary, he explicitly states

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Para. 111: "cetera Gallus ab Italo minime dinosceretur,. ... fortes lassitudo et vulnera et imber praegravant."

⁴⁰⁷ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Para. 84: "Hinc excita finibus suis Scytharum saeva gens, sive illi Gothi, sive Unni aliudve genus hominum agreste fuerit: exciti Vandali, Eruli Langobardique; nam, antea parere soliti romano imperio, ubi cognovere virtutem per socordiam atque ignaviam defluxisse, primo deficere, mox ultro invadere Romanos coepere, neque pati quicquam asperum foedumque intentatum, donec Italiae vastitas finem libidini eorum fecit."

that the prolonged period of peace between the Italian city-states during the late-fifteenth century resulted directly from the wise governance of great political leaders:

These most prudent of all the rulers of Italy, because their minds were bent on the protection of the communal liberty, peace and leisure, allied their policies together, policies which had been given and handed down from their relations as if by hereditary law. The established alliances passed into their hands from their fathers as if by the law of heredity. They assiduously stirred up, moved and strove for the things by which the state of Italy was stabilized or (to use their own words) they balanced them equally. Indeed, these most serious men with minds seeing far into posterity, feared lest the power of their friends and allies injured would return to them; they did not think it possible for those powers to be ruined without their own powers being ruined by the same violent motion.⁴⁰⁸

Good governance is described as the recognition of the interconnectedness of the city-states and their common stability. Rucellai asserts that these “most prudent rulers” themselves, with whom he had regularly interacted in his function as diplomat, conceived of their roles as maintaining a *balance* between the powers.

The other characteristic of wise rulership, according to Rucellai, is a wider, more encompassing perspective on events. He says that for Piero de’Medici to return to *sanitas* (which has the connotation both of good sense and health), he must look not merely to the immediate interests, but to foresee and provide for far in the future “as if from a high lookout.”⁴⁰⁹ Failure to adopt this approach is a direct cause for a war “that could have

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Para. 4: “Hi, longe prudentissimi omnium Italiae principum, cum ad protegendam communem libertatem pacemque et otium intendissent animum consociassentque consilia, iam inde a parentibus veluti iure hereditario relictā ac per manus tradita, ea assidue agitare, monere, niti, quibus res Italiae starent ac, ut illorum verbis utar, examine aequo penderent. Verebantur enim gravissimi homines ac longe animo in posterum prospicientes ne sociorum atque amicorum labefactata imperia ad se reciderent, neque ruere illa posse existimabant, quin sua quoque eodem motu concussa prolaberentur.” My emphasis.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Para. 12: “qui, pro more habitis verbis apud summum Magistratum, secreta admonerent hominem suaderentque ut ad officium sanitatemque reverteretur, neque tantum quod in propinquo foret, sed veluti ex alta specula quam longissime provideret, amicitiam a parentibus maioribusque per manus traditam coleret, neque alienam cuperet: altera diuturnam pacem fuisse partam, altera saepius bellum renovatum.”

been avoided if leaders had [had] *sanitas*.”⁴¹⁰ *De bello italico* offers evidence for both a holistic conception of good governance and one concerned with health and balance.

With the exception of Piero Capponi, who is lauded for his decisive and assertive intervention in the negotiations between Florence and Charles VIII in October 1494, there are no great leaders among the cast of characters of *De bello italico*.⁴¹¹ Rather, the text offers its readers a series of poor leaders that might serve to varying degrees as negative exempla. Charles VIII, for example, is presented in ambiguous terms. From the moment of his introduction in the text, the French king is described as having a disproportionate body (an especially large head) and as susceptible to the influence of his court.⁴¹² Similar themes are evident in the brief summary of his life that accompanies the notice of his death in paragraph 150 of the text:

Charles, twenty-nine years old, died of apoplexy in Gaul. Born from a father already old and consumed by epilepsy, he experienced less than agreeable health from childhood: after which, he gave himself over entirely to sexual license in his conduct with respect to the court as well in Gaul.⁴¹³

Although Rucellai lauds the French king’s noble intentions to use the Ottoman Prince Djem in a crusade against the Turks, this concern for the welfare of Christendom, however, does not prevent Charles VIII from letting his troops desecrate churches or kill defenseless civilians in the Italian countryside.⁴¹⁴ The entire Italian campaign is presented

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Para. 12: “Ita maximarum rerum initia, quibus facile occurri poterat, si principum adesset sanitas, maximum incrementum habuere.”

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, Para. 75-6.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, Para. 15-18.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, Par. 150: “Carolus in Gallia apoplexia moritur, annum agens nonum et vigesimum. Patre enim iam senescente confectoque comitali morbo genitus, valetudinem minus commodam a parvis tulit, quam postea praeceps in Venerem licentia, regia simul et gallica, auxit.”

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Par. 92: “Hunc Carolus, quem diximus maria ac terras concepisse animo, quod erat Iemin manu promptus, munificentia animi carus acceptusque popularibus, peridoneum nactus quem fratri opponeret, ab Alexandro extorserat ut suo ductu auspicioque contra Turcas militaret, existimans permultum conducere Christiano nomini simul et gloriae suae si ille, popularium factione ac viribus Gallorum fultus, cum fratre confligeret; perfacile factu esse ut intestino odio inter se certantibus integrum regnum in partes distractum

as the result of the undue influence that Ludovico Sforza and some French aristocrats avid for the glory and bounty of war exerted upon the French king.⁴¹⁵ The French monarch is not duplicitous or cowardly, but he is susceptible to poor counselling. After Charles VIII's retreat to France, Rucellai provides a physical description of the French monarch again in even less flattering terms:

Charles was eager for glory, lavish to his [own], tempermental in character as well as accomplished with a biting wit. Nevertheless, dullness appeared to be present in that same aspect: moreover, he was short in body, with very large head and feet, a slender leg, blue-grey eyes, and a crooked, prominent nose. To sum up, the condition of all of his body was just about worthy for abhorring to such an extent that, if brought before him, it would be a specimen of a monstrous man.⁴¹⁶

The French king's quest for glory, Rucellai claims, failed in that he was "greater in happiness than in glory" (*felicitate quam gloria maior*).⁴¹⁷ Nowhere in the text is the young king praised for his wisdom or his benevolence, even though his Christian motivations are presented as genuine. He is easily manipulated, dull and even monstrous. The disproportion of his body was but another physical manifestation of this leader's lack of *sanitas*.

Pope Alexander VI is the most censured figure in *De bello italico*, and a large part of the responsibility for the invasion of Italy is attributed to his actions. From paragraph five on, pontifical power is introduced as one of the causes of the French invasion: "To no one more than the Popes can the responsibility of having kindled the fires of war be

laberetur."

⁴¹⁵*Ibid.*, Par. 18: "Quod post patris obitum, quam primum occasione data per Itatorum seditiones Galliaeque procures donis corruptos, suscepit.

⁴¹⁶*Ibid.*, Par. 128: "Fuit Carolus avidus gloriae, sui profusus, ingenio vario atque acuto, quodam lepore solers, ita tamen ut stupiditas quaedam inesse appareret. Corpore autem brevi, capite ac pedibus praegrandibus, crure gracillimo, oculis glaucis, adunco ac prominenti naso, denique corporis totius habitu usque adeo ab iusto abhorrenti ut fere monstri hominis speciem prae se ferret."

⁴¹⁷*Ibid.*, Par. 28.

attributed.”⁴¹⁸ Alexander VI’s conflict with King Alfonso leads Charles VIII to believe that the pontiff would support his campaign for Naples and his personal conflict with Giuliano della Rovere, who fled Italy because of the Pope’s schemes, brings about a rousing and timely speech that reinvigorates the French expedition on the verge of turning back. It is worth noting that Giuliano della Rovere was not present at the French camp in August 1494; he was on his way to Genoa to arrange for support for the French invasion among his own supporters in Liguria and his fictitious direct speech stands in for months of support for the expedition. Giuliano della Rovere had arrived in Lyons on 1 June 1494 and advocated, along with the French cardinal Perraud, for the French king’s help in calling a council to remove Alexander VI as Pope and enforce church reform.⁴¹⁹ In *De bello italico*, however, Giuliano della Rovere appears as a *deus ex machina*, as it were, to encourage the French when their spirits are low. Readers are told that Giuliano della Rovere had fled the Pope’s unjust persecution heading first to Ostia and then to Avignon.⁴²⁰ Giuliano della Rovere’s speech soothes the fears of the troops as he addresses their concerns one-by-one and points out that

Besides — to mention something beyond the realm of the human — the immortal gods favour the concerns of the Gauls: Accordingly, they imparted to all Italians the wish for a most Christian realm as once was made by Charlemagne. They wish that the Church were set free and ripped from the impious hands of Alexander for whom, of course, pontifical rule should be the greatest concern.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Par. 5: “...a quibus magis quam a pontificibus belli incendia excitata sint.”

⁴¹⁹ Shaw, *Julius II*, 93-8.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, Par. 41: “Is [Iulianus Ruvera], initio pontificatus Alexandri, quem ipse ad tanti muneris fastigium evexerat, illi infestus, quod statum dignitatis apud immemorem beneficii non obtinebat, ingenium hominis pertimescens, Ostia Tiberina satis firmo praesidio munitas secesserat; deinde, gliscente iam formidine, Avenionem profugerat.”

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, Par. 42: “Praeterea -- quod supra mortale fastigium est -- deos immortales adesse rebus Gallicis: siquidem eam mentem dederent Italis omnibus, qua exoptarent per Christianissimum regem, ut olim a Carolo magno factum est, Christianam rempublicam in libertatem vindicari, eripique ex impiis Alexandri manibus; quippe cui pontificia potestas summae curae esse debuit, ipse portenti similis potissimum eius extincor sit.”

Rucellai rewrites history in order to make it clear that without Alexander VI's conflicts with Cardinal San Pietro ad Vincula, the French invasion of Italy would not have happened. He breaks with his own convention of writing in indirect speech in order to make the intervention by Giuliano della Rovere more vivid and more powerful.

At his first appearance in the text, Rucellai introduces Alexander VI as "notorious with respect to every crime" (*facinore omni insignis*). One paragraph later, Rucellai describes him as "the enemy of peace and tranquility."⁴²² When discussing Charles VIII's advance towards Rome, Rucellai calls Alexander the most wicked of all men of our times.⁴²³ His specific character flaws are also enumerated. Alexander is described as duplicitious and his heart, readers are told, has many a lurking place.⁴²⁴ He is a poisoner, the most cowardly and dishonourable type of killer, who murdered the captive Turkish prince, Djem, a possible ally for the crusade against the Turks, out of greed and jealousy and in order to destabilize a situation that was not advantageous to him.⁴²⁵ Whereas Djem is presented in a positive light, as a valuable ally "of great strength of mind and body, desiring war and eminent among those distinguished in military studies," Alexander is described as "he who, beholden to guilt, was moved headlong into wickedness."⁴²⁶ Poison and poisoning were linked with the magical and the occult in fifteenth-century Italy and would have been considered inappropriate deeds for a reigning pontiff, to say

⁴²²*Ibid.*, Par. 6: "Alexandrum otii ac pacis hostem."

⁴²³*Ibid.*, Par. 105: "Alexander, nequissimus omnium quos saecula nostra viderunt."

⁴²⁴*Ibid.*, Par. 11: "Alexander, cuius corde multae latebrae multique inerrant recessus;"

⁴²⁵*Ibid.*, Par. 93: "Verum Alexander, quem minime decuit, consilio tam salutari adversatus est, lento veneno, ut plerique persuasum habent, opportunissimum rebus novandis hominem aggressus. Nam paucis diebus post, sensim irrepente vi morbi, Neapoli moritur."

⁴²⁶*Ibid.*, Par. 93: "ipse, avaritiae obnoxius, scelere praeceps ageretur;" "Fuit quidem Iemin magna vi animi et corporis, belli appetens, militaribus studiis inter insignes egregius."

the least.⁴²⁷ Alexander VI's cowardice is censured on another occasion in *De bello italico*: As the French troops approached Rome and people begin to flee the city, Alexander retreats to the safety of the Castel Sant'Angelo instead of heading out to meet the French king himself and helping to prevent the looting of the Eternal City.⁴²⁸ Alexander VI is an unequivocal villain in *De bello italico*, lacking any concern for the well-being of the flock over which he should preside.

The Borgia Pope has many character flaws, but it is not merely his vicious nature that undermines papal rule in *De bello italico*. In his direct speech condemning Alexander VI, Cardinal della Rovere criticizes the Pope for mixing "together, indiscriminately, the divine and the human."⁴²⁹ Rucellai is elsewhere skeptical of divine influence over secular affairs when he calls a "popular superstition" the French habit of venerating their kings as if they were of divine birth.⁴³⁰ In fact, at the outset of the text, the characteristic for which Rucellai most villifies his own age is that "divine and human law are mixed together."⁴³¹

Another example of Bernardo Rucellai's deep antipathy to religious involvement in political affairs is his treatment, or rather, the lack thereof, of Fra Girolamo Savonarola. In 1494, the Dominican friar had come to prominence when his

⁴²⁷ Trevor Dean, *Crime and Justice in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), esp. 155-167; Jean de Maleissye, *Histoire du poison* (Paris: F. Bourin, 1991), chapter 7.

⁴²⁸ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Par. 89: "Alexandrum vero, multis simul anxium curis circumventumque difficultatibus quae animum diversae trahebant, id praecipue agitavit, quorsum evaderet tanta belli moles. Conscientia enim scelerumtrepidam mentem vexabat, neque satis praesidii in maiestate pontificia, neque virium, Ferdinando duce praefectisque copiarum nutantibus, ad tuendam urbem fore arbitrabatur, undique premente metu simul et frumenti inopia, quod ne flumine subveheretur Iulianus Ruvera Tyberis ostium praeseperat. Rursus si recederet fideique alienae se committeret, anxius erat ne, imminuta dignitate, culpam ex conscientia in se convertendo, obviis iniuriae fieret, cuncta praesertim Italia concussa nutanteque ad tanti belli motum."

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, Para. 42: "... habeatque cuncta divina atque humana promiscua."

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, Para. 16: "Ea enim gens Gallica est ut superstitione ducatur regesque suos quasi diis prognatos pie sancteque veneretur."

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, Para. 1: "Nobis ... in ea saecula devenimus quibus omnia iura divina atque humana permiscuntur."

millenarianist preachings were confirmed by the arrival of the French army and its artillery train. After the Florentines ousted Piero de' Medici for having given over the important Florentine-controlled ports of Livorno and Pisa, the *Signoria* sent six ambassadors to negotiate with Charles VIII –among them both Bernardo Rucellai and Savonarola. In Rucellai's account of the speeches that were exchanged between the diplomats and the monarch, the friar's voice is strikingly absent. Savonarola's successful intervention in these negotiations was a main cause for his increased prominence in 1494, yet Rucellai attributes the resolution of the conflict to another figure, Piero Capponi. This “man born of a great, noble and famous family, of remarkable spirit and then the leader of an embassy,” was so moved by fury at the king's unreasonable demands, that he “pulled to pieces in the sight of all” the document and turned to his colleagues saying “let us go to deliberate concerning our republic, seeing that the king spurns fair conditions in this way.”⁴³² Rucellai tells us that the French monarch was greatly moved by this show of outrage and feared a confrontation within the city walls. Savonarola returned to the city a hero and remained a prominent figure in Florentine political life until his sudden demise and execution in 1498 –at the hand of a committee on which Bernardo Rucellai sat –yet his name does not appear once in *De bello italico*. By omitting the preacher and his political followers from his narrative of the Italian Wars, Rucellai denies the effective involvement of religious leaders in political life.

⁴³²*Ibid.*, Par. 75: ““Erat Petrus Caponius nobili genere clarisque maioribus ortus, vir ingentis spiritus, et tum legationis princeps, cuius animum antiqua virtus ac suorum in patriam fortia gesta, ingens ad facinus egregium stimulus, accendebant... confestim extortis e manibus regis scribae commentariis ubi capita rerum quas Gallus depoposcerat ordine conscripta fuerant, ea omnium in conspectu ita conscidit ut, distractis in partes varias fragmentis, in integrum restitui minime possent, simulque, ad collegas conversus, «Eamus – inquit – consulturi nostrae reipublicae, quandoquidem rex tam aequas condiciones respuit!».”

The political community that is the subject of *De bello italico* is broad and includes all readers, not merely those of Florentine origins. The social group is conceived of as an organic body in which individual components remain distinct even as they share a common nature and history. Communities that can overcome their factionalism are described as existing in a state of *concordia*. Competent rule in Rucellai's narrative includes the recognition of the interconnectedness of the well-being of the different constituent groups and a willingness to put one's own interests aside in order to maintain peace. The political leaders who serve as the cast of characters for *De bello italico*, however, are predominantly negative examples who demonstrate the folly of mixing the sacred and the profane and the vast gulf between intentions and consequences. This material serves as the building blocks out of which Rucellai constructed his account of Charles VIII's Italian campaign.

As we will see in the next section, the thematic reading of *De bello italico* is corroborated and finds a counterpart in the style and architecture adopted by Rucellai to present the material. Rucellai encourages his readers to respond to his narrative in a way that would forge a sense of community through eliciting a strong emotional response and sense of shared history. Furthermore, his diction, pace and structure demonstrates the vast difficulties faced by political leaders in the sixteenth century. Lastly, readers must wrestle with a text with a decidedly pessimistic tone that undermines within itself both the usefulness of historical narrative and the likelihood of continued self-rule by the Italian city-states.

Rucellai's Philosophy of History

The following analysis shows that Rucellai adopted classical tropes and classical style with a view to relating contemporary events to those of the Ancient world. His manifest intention, as stated in the *proemium*, is to provide, like Greek and Roman historians before him, a set of exempla for virtuous life. As such *De bello italico* is a typical humanist history, its diction, aims and style following the conventions of classical historiography favoured by fifteenth-century Renaissance humanists. But this conventional veneer cracks under a more careful scrutiny. The way Rucellai appropriates Lucian's conception of history and Sallustian prose to evoke a strong emotional response in his reader reveals a tension between his stated intention and the actual effect of the text. The edifying power of historical exempla fails if embedded in a narrative unsuitable for philosophical contemplation, either because it is too emotionally charged, or too complex.

i) Classicisation and the Proemium

The most readily apparent classicising element in *De bello italico* is the cast of characters. Rucellai consistently refers to the peoples involved in Charles VIII's campaign by the name of the ancient peoples that once populated those lands. This convention is established early on in the text when, at the end of the second paragraph, we are told that "a little something should be said regarding the state of affairs and the habits of mind before the *Gaul* [my emphasis] invaded Italy."⁴³³ Whereas the city of Milan is referred to as *Mediolano* six times over the course of the text, the Milanese

⁴³³ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Par. 2: "quis rerum status, quis animorum habitus antequam Gallus Italiam invaderet paucis disserendum."

people are in fifteen instances in the text referred to as *Insubres* -- an ancient and powerful Celtic people attributed with the founding of Milan in the fifth century BCE, who opposed the Romans during the second century CE. Only once are they named as *Longobards* (Lombards), the Germanic tribe that settled the area in late antiquity. In opting for classical nomenclature to describe the Milanese, Rucellai emphasises their ancient pedigree over their medieval ancestry.⁴³⁴ The classical history of the Italian peninsula was one of strong, political ties between cities and imperial military might. This is consistent with the overall characterization of the Middle Ages as the "Dark Ages" by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italian humanists.⁴³⁵ Cities and peoples without ancient foundations, like Venice, are referred to by their Italian names, but by imposing a classical overlay on the Italian peninsula, Rucellai asserts that Italy is the main heir to the classical world.

Rucellai classicises his narrative in respects other than just his names for the peoples of Italy. In his descriptions of political and military leadership, he also adopts archaic terminology: The Signoria of Florence is the Senate (*Senatus*) and the leaders of armies are *duces* rather than *capitani*. This tendency towards anachronism extends to the religious aspects of the text. It is *templa* rather than *ecclesiae* that are ravaged by French troops: their desecration is an affront to the gods (*deorum*) rather than to God. This is best evidenced in Rucellai's description of the siege and massacre at Gaeta, which ends with a heart-rending description of priests pleading for their lives, as they are slaughtered in "the

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, Par. 2; 3; 7; 8; 12; 22; 34; 47; 112; 120; 122; 123; 125; 126; 151.

⁴³⁵ Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970), esp. 21-49, 105-130; Theodore E. Mommsen, "Petrarch's Conception of the 'Dark Ages,'" *Speculum* 17:2 (1942), 226-242.

temples of the immortal gods."⁴³⁶ The classicisms of *De bello italico* demonstrate a conscious effort on Rucellai's part to create a sense of continuity between his time and the ancient world thereby to write himself into the tradition of classical historiography.

The most explicit statement of this philosophy of history appears in the work's *proemium*. Bernardo Rucellai begins *De bello italico* with two paragraphs that explicitly define the scope and argument of the text. The first four sentences of the work set up a comparison between the classical world and fifteenth-century Italy. The finished product of the historical craft is likened to the artistic productions of ancient Greece, specifically those of Phidias and Praxiteles "whose special excellence it was to portray the image of an ominous marvel rather than that of gods, kings and emperors."⁴³⁷ The precepts of historical writing require that "virtue and vice are on record as *exempla* for pursuing and avoiding the deeds by which mortals are set apart for eternal glory."⁴³⁸ Here we see the typical exemplarist paradigm for historical writing.⁴³⁹

Furthermore, Rucellai cites Cicero's famous assertion that the first law of history is to say nothing false nor to dare to be silent about any truth.⁴⁴⁰ The writer of recent history, however, can no longer depict the piety and virtue which "were continually and energetically respected" in the classical era.⁴⁴¹ Instead of "noble deeds" (*praeclara*

⁴³⁶ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Par. 132: "Saevitiae argumentum – ne singula referam quae memorando reformidat animus – exemplo unius rei, quae nulla religionum consuetudinisque iura retinuerit, notasse sat erit: quod sacerdotes, cum velamentis ceterisque christianis insignibus suppliciter precantes ut a caede et ab incendio parceretur, trucidaverint foedaverintque augusta deorum immortalium templa."

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, Par. 1: "quod Phidiae ac Praxiteli caeterisque Graecis hominibus in fingendo pingendoque libuit: quibus praecipuum fuit, ut potius deorum, regum, atque imperatorum, quam portentosi monstri effigiem exprimerent."

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, Par. 1: ut virtus atque flagitium veluti exemplar extent ad ea expetenda declinandave quibus mortales aeternae gloriae consecrantur. Livy makes similar claims in the opening book of *History of Rome* (1: 10-12).

⁴³⁹ George H. Nadel, "Philosophy of History before Historicism," *History and Theory* 3:3 (1964): 291-315.

⁴⁴⁰ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Par. 1; Cf. Cicero, *De Oratore* ii, 15: "Nam quis nescit, primam esse historiae legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat deinde ne quid veri non audeat."

⁴⁴¹ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Par. 1: "cum pietas ac virtus assidue animo obversarentur."

facinora), Rucellai's age is one of "conspicuous crimes" (*insignia scelera*).⁴⁴² The fifteenth-century historian thus has two options: either "to pass over in silence the history of this age" or "to record for posterity horrible things that ought to be dreaded greatly by those very men who saw them."⁴⁴³ Other Renaissance historians, such as Benedetto Accolti, had similar aims for their histories, such as making the deeds of the past come to life and inspiring readers to emulate or avoid them.⁴⁴⁴

ii) Style

Rucellai's opening reference to Phidias and Praxiteles, however, does more than merely link his own work to ancient exemplary history.⁴⁴⁵ It is also a programmatic statement about style that hints at the limited persuasiveness of the genre. As Donatella Coppini has argued, Rucellai adopts Lucian of Samosata's theory according to which the task of the historian is one of vivid description (*enargeia*).⁴⁴⁶ Lucian was an apt source from which to borrow a conception of history. His writings had been newly reintroduced to Florence and were seen as "a model for rhetoric that addresses, and possibly redresses, the public scourges of war and tyranny."⁴⁴⁷ In *How to Write History*, the Greek

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, Par. 1: "Nobis autem; qui malo humani generis in ea saecula devenimus, quibus omnia iura divina atque humana permiscentur, unde secuta imperia saeva, scelestas, facinorosa, bella, excidia, strages; miserendum est."

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, Par. 1: "quippe quibus necesse habetur vel praeterire silentio huius aetatis memoriam, vel pleraque omnia describere ingrato animo horrendis posteris, ac iis ipsis, qui ea viderint, reformidanda."

⁴⁴⁴ Robert Black, *Benedetto Accolti and the Florentine Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 306.

⁴⁴⁵ Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: the Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

⁴⁴⁶ Donatella Coppini, introduction to *De bello italico* by Bernardo Rucellai, edited by Donatella Coppini, 2-5; See Polybius, *Histories*, 3.54.2; Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, 886B35. Another term for *enargeia* is *demonstratione*.

⁴⁴⁷ David Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins: Humor and Humanism in the Early Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 12; Ernest Berti, "Alla scuola di Manuele Crisolora: Lettura e commento di Luciano," *Rinascimento* 27: 3-73. For a brief treatment of *How to Write History*, see G. M. A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995), 336-338. See also Keith Sidwell, "Lucian in the Italian Quattrocento," Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1975.

rhetorician used the very same examples of Phidias and Praxiteles to describe how an historian ought to compose history:

Above all, let him bring a mind like a mirror, clear, gleaming-bright, accurately centred, displaying the shape of things just as he receives them, free from distortion, false colouring, and misrepresentation. His concern is different from that of the orators—what historians have to relate is fact and will speak for itself, for it has already happened: what is required is arrangement and exposition. So they must look not for what to say but how to say it. In brief, we must consider that the writer of history should be like Phidias or Praxiteles or Alcamenes or one of the other sculptors—they certainly never manufactured their own gold or silver or ivory or other material; no, their material was before them, put into their hands by Eleans or Athenians or Argives, and they confined themselves to fashioning it. ...The task of the historian is similar: to give a fine arrangement of events and illuminate them as vividly as possible. And when a man who has heard him thinks thereafter that he is actually seeing what is being described and then praises him—then it is that the work of our Phidias of history is perfect and has received its proper praise.⁴⁴⁸

Unlike Polybius and other ancient writers on history, Lucian of Samasota establishes history as its own genre with its own requirements and expectations, separate from rhetoric.⁴⁴⁹ Furthermore, he discusses the kind of style appropriate to history, emphasising the importance of vivid description and a quick pace. History should also be free of long descriptions that might distract the reader from the main narrative. Rucellai himself does not use the term *enargeia*, but he does explain his method in similar terms. In the second paragraph of the *De bello italico*, he describes the material of his monograph and his method as "to bring before the eyes (*ante oculos ponere*) the councils, actions and events as things worthy of memory."⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁸ Lucian, *How to Write History* in *The Works of Lucian*, trans. K. Kilburn (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1959), VI, sections 50-51, 63-65.

⁴⁴⁹ See Luciano Canfora, *Teorie e tecnica della storiografia classica: Luciano, Plutarco, Dionigi, Anonimo su Tucidide* (Rome: Editori Laterza, 1974), esp. 1-34; Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), esp. 5-76.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Par. 2: "non alienum videbitur consilia, acta, eventusque rerum, ut quaeque memoria digna extiterunt, aperire, ac, quantum ingenio possim, ante oculos ponere."

Lucian provided Rucellai with a general philosophy of history, but it is from Sallust that the Florentine historian draws his particular style of Latin.⁴⁵¹ C. Sallustius Crispus was a Roman historian active between 44 and 35 BCE who provided an account of the political scene of the Catiline conspiracy and the military campaign in Numidia during which Sulla and Marius began their rivalry.⁴⁵² Sallust was one of the most popular prose writers in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, with over five hundred different manuscripts having come down to the present day.⁴⁵³ Widely disseminated because his works were used as pedagogical tools for their pithy style, Sallust's portrayal of political crises as moral ones developed a "logical, disastrous sequence from peace to discord, bringing wealth, ambition, corruption and discord, to social and civil war."⁴⁵⁴ Furthermore, his focus on geography and analysis of motive offered the historical monograph as an alternative to either biography or universal history.⁴⁵⁵

Sallust provided an apt and easily recognizable model to write a history of the Italian Wars of 1494-5. Interestingly, the first scholar to recognize Sallustian influence on Bernardo Rucellai's text was Erasmus, who wrote in his *Apophthegmata* that "in Venice I met the Florentine Bernardo Rucellai whose history, if you were to read it, you would say that he was another Sallust or certainly that his history was written in Sallust's time."⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵¹ There is no question that Bernardo Rucellai was familiar with the works of Sallust. In a letter to Robert Acciaiuoli, Rucellai recounts a conversation about the merits of the different Latin historians in which he extols Caesar and Livy as well as Sallust. Pontano, the interlocutor in the letter, names Sallust as "lex et exemplar historiae." Burmannus, *Sylloges Epistolarum a Viris Illustribus Scriptarum* vol. II, 201.

⁴⁵² Ronald Syme, *Sallust* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964).

⁴⁵³ Reynolds, *Texts and Transmission*, 345.

⁴⁵⁴ Beryl Smalley, "Sallust in the Middle Ages," *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 500-1500*, Vol. 1, ed. R. R. Bolgar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 165.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 171-2.

⁴⁵⁶ Desiderius Erasmus, *Apophthegmata* in *Opera Omnia* IV (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1961-2), 363E: "Novi Venetiae Bernardum Oricellarium, civem Florentinorum, cuius Historis si legisses, dixisses alterum Sallustium, aut certe Sallustii temporibus scriptas." The Dutch humanist met with the Florentine historian and statesman in 1506 in Venice, but the two were unable to converse for Erasmus spoke no Italian and Rucellai

Erasmus recognized that Rucellai's Latin was characterized by archaisms, omitted conjunctions (asyndeton), variations in grammatical construction, brevity, historical infinitives and rapidity, all of which were the hallmarks of Sallustian prose.⁴⁵⁷

Selecting Sallust as a model was more than a mere aesthetic decision.⁴⁵⁸ For one, parallels between Sallust and Rucellai extend to their biographies. Both men wrote from exile after a life of active political involvement. In contrast to Sallust, however, Rucellai had not entirely given up on his public career when he wrote his historical text and would return to active involvement in Florentine political life with the restoration of the Medici in 1512. Nevertheless, the two authors share a general sense of disillusionment with the politics of their times. Whereas for Sallust this is most evident in passages where he defends his withdrawal from politics, for Rucellai, as we shall see, this is clearest in his ambivalent perspective on the usefulness of historical learning in political life.⁴⁵⁹

Rucellai's commentary on the French invasion in fact imitates specific Sallustian texts: the *Jugurthan Wars* and the *Catiline Conspiracy*. It does so in a number of ways that point to important motivations for his own writing. Besides from structural and textual resemblances, *De bello italico* and Sallust's two monographs espouse similar themes and put forward similar arguments.⁴⁶⁰ Rucellai's choice of Sallust as an example worthy of emulation indeed demonstrates that both historians shared a primary concern with civic

refused to converse in Latin despite his obvious fluency; Pierre de Nolhac, *Erasme en Italie* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1888), 47-8.

⁴⁵⁷ On Sallustian style, see P. McGushin (ed.), *C. Sallustius Crispus, Bellum Catilinae: a commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 13-21.

⁴⁵⁸ In one of his articles, Guglielmo Pelligrini argues that the *De bello italico* should be understood as a stylistic exercise. In his view, its account lacks a firm chronological anchorage, contains mistakes, and can be found in a number of other sixteenth century histories. His harsh criticism of Rucellai's historical works overlooks important aspects of the text, however, such as its choice in models and the vision for political governance that it espouses. Pellegrini, *L'umanista Bernardo Rucellai*, 55.

⁴⁵⁹ D. C. Earl, *The Political Thought of Sallust* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1961), 120.

⁴⁶⁰ For this part of my argument, I am indebted to the work of McCuaig, "Bernardo Rucellai and Sallust," *Rinascimento* 22 (1982): 75-98.

discord and were opposed to the destabilisation of government. In fact many Quattrocento humanists interpreted *Jugurthan Wars* and *Catiline Conspiracy* as celebrations of the communal spirit and patriotism of Republican Rome and as warnings against the decline of civic harmony.⁴⁶¹ Patricia J. Osmond claims that the appropriation of Sallust by the Italian humanists was a reflection of

factional rivalries in Florence and Padua [that] heightened the awareness of Sallust's political lessons and [that it] induced the proponents of communal government to consider the moral and social causes of a republic's breakdown as well as its success.⁴⁶²

Although the rise of the Medici caused a muting of the republican aspects of Sallust's texts, later historians continued to imitate their Roman predecessor stylistically in their own praise of civic harmony and condemnation of conspiracy and factionalism.⁴⁶³

De bello italico, like *Jugurthan Wars* and *Catiline Conspiracy*, is a cautionary tale. Rucellai sets out to record the military disasters of the late-fifteenth century in order to warn future generations against the dangers of an imbalance in the political constitution. Like Sallust, Rucellai had access to eyewitness accounts of the events he narrates: he followed Charles VIII to Naples and saw first-hand the devastation caused by French forces; he himself participated in the negotiations that he narrates.⁴⁶⁴ While *De bello italico* cautions readers explicitly in the *proemium*, it also does so stylistically throughout the work by adopting emotive and evocative language to bring the horrors of

⁴⁶¹Both Coluccio Salutati and Leonardo Bruni, Florentine chancellors and eminent humanist thinkers, adopted a Sallustian model for their own histories that thinly veiled politically programmatic views in defense of Florentine republicanism. Patricia J. Osmond, "*Princeps Historiae Romanae*: Sallust in Renaissance Political Thought," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 40 (1995), 103 and 108.

⁴⁶²*Ibid.*, 105.

⁴⁶³*Ibid.*, 111.

⁴⁶⁴As McCuaig has noted, there are at least five occasions when Rucellai insists on his eyewitness testimony of events and these are all in connection with rumoured occurrences. McCuaig, "Bernardo Rucellai," 82.

modern warfare to the reader as viewer, and thus forms a mirror for the content of his work.

Rucellai's history, when carefully analysed, offers much more than an account of diplomacy and military conflict, taking place in a string of councils, battles and negotiations. It adopts a perspective and style that turns the reader into a spectator of events. Donatella Coppini describes Rucellai's narrative of the Italian Wars of 1494-5 as an "horizontal montage," and the metaphor is apt.⁴⁶⁵ I interpret the tableau it renders as composed of four parts: topographic description, vivid violence eliciting pathos, eye-witness and privileged perspective, and direct address to the reader. These components work together to bring to life the calamities brought about by the French invasion of Italy, and make the reader experience this trauma.

There are three main occasions when *De bello italico* provides the topographic setting for an event: (1) The Battle of Rapallo; (2) negotiations between Charles VIII and Florentine ambassadors at Segni; (3) Naples upon Charles VIII's arrival. It is fitting that the local landscape is examined oftentimes from an aerial view in that wisdom itself is defined by Rucellai as being able to foresee not only the immediate, but also the distant future "as if from a high place."⁴⁶⁶ Rucellai uses descriptive passages to emphasise the importance of context in understanding the causes of events, the characters of participants, and the gruesome nature of the Italian Wars.

Before his account of the Battle of Rapallo, the first military encounter between the French forces (under the command of Louis d'Orléans) and the Neapolitan forces (under the command of Federico of Aragon), Rucellai describes the Ligurian landscape:

⁴⁶⁵ Coppini, introduction to *De bello italico*, 8.

⁴⁶⁶ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Par. 12: "Neque tantum quod in propinquo foret, sed veluti ex alta specula quam longissime provideret."

Rapallo is a small town positioned on the shore about 20 miles from Genoa in the direction of Tuscany. Located near a small plain, Rapallo is is not so much favoured by fortification as by the nature of the place, that performs thus for almost all the other fortresses on those shores which are extended to the Magra river and to Lunigiana. For the majority of the steep, craggy shores with capes as well as reefs for the most part close in the dreary plain ... where small towns are interposed for attending to maritime trade more than protecting the region with a strengthened wall or citadel.⁴⁶⁷

The link between topography and communal character is explicit and integral to an understanding of the political events: "Such is the nature of that region and the Ligurian character that being safe from external force and injury, they are troubled by internal mischief and march headlong with rivalry and discord."⁴⁶⁸ Both the physical and psychological setting of Rapallo and Liguria are relevant for an account of the Italian Wars.

When Charles VIII stops his march at Signa and receives Bartolomeo Buondelmonti and Bernardo Rucellai as Florentine ambassadors, the setting of the encounter is described in idyllic terms:

That castle is seven miles from the city, positioned on a hill and most advantageous of all for bringing about devastation as well as surrounding the region and the overwhelmed Florentines with fire. As you see, [the city] situated on a hill of some height, the base of which the river Arno flows past as if a rampart offers very great opportunities for assaulting the city because on one side it observed Florence — there is an expansive fields with fertile soil, very populated, and amply sufficient for supplies to the inhabitants — and it offers ramparts all the way up until an access for the incursionists, as the arms of the river flowing by are so very few and

⁴⁶⁷*Ibid.*, Par. 26: "Parvulum id oppidum est in litore positum a Genua Etruriam versus circiter milia passuum viginti, quod, parva admodum planitie adiacente, non adeo munitionibus, sed natura loci praestat, ut fere sunt cetera cuncta eius orae castella, quad ad Macram amnem Lundensemque tractum protenditur. Nam pleraque litora scopulosa arduaque promontoriis atque cautibus, interim exigum plantiem, si qua se aperit, claudunt ubi oppidula interposita ad maritima negotia obeunda magis quam ad tuendam regionem, muro aut arce firmata."

⁴⁶⁸*Ibid.*, Par. 25: "Ea natura regionis est, id Ligurum ingenium, ut, vi externa iniuriaque maxime tuti, intestino malo laborent simultateque ac discordia praecipites eant."

full of shallows. From the other side, a stoney bridge connects the banks of the river and the road is kept free into the region opposite.⁴⁶⁹

Unlike the other three topographic descriptions, Signa is not the site of a military conflict, but rather of diplomatic negotiations. Its strategic value lies in being an easily defensible base from which to launch an assault on the prosperous countryside. Rucellai's first-hand experience travelling to meet with the French King assuredly influenced his description of the countryside and he makes his privileged vantage point evident to the reader by naming himself as one of the ambassadors. This pastoral description contrasts sharply with the long list of horrific images of "fire, blood and tears" conjured up by the Florentines as Charles VIII approaches.⁴⁷⁰ This list is presented without conjunctions, thus creating a more extemporaneous effect and suggesting that even the dozen or so images recounted are incomplete. Neither set of images— the one set in the readers' imaginations, and featuring a fertile plain crossed by babbling brooks, the other set in the imaginations of the Florentines, featuring a ravaged city— is more real than the other, yet the imaginary one has dire political consequences, for the despair in Florence leads to the expulsion of Piero de' Medici and to governmental reform. The reader is expected to partake in both, and the "sight" of Signa on its hilltop, gazing down at the Tuscan plain, makes the fears of the Florentine citizens all the more horrific by contrast. The use of comparison and contrast in descriptions is a frequent method adopted by Rucellai to make his narrative more vivid.

⁴⁶⁹*Ibid.*, Par. 64: "Quippe situm in colle parum edito, cujus radices Arnus fluvius praeterfluit, veluti agger oppugnandae urbis permagnas habet opportunitates; propterea quod ab ea parte, qua Florentiam spectat, lata planities, solo fertilis, frequensque cultoribus affatim commeatum suppetit, praebetque moenia usque incursionibus aditum, paucis tantum hisque vadosis amnibus interfluentibus. Ex altera parte pons lapideus fluminis ripas committit, iterque liberum in oppositam praestat regionem.."

⁴⁷⁰*Ibid.*, Par. 65: "Videremus ab hoste barbaro urbem flammari, rempublicam deleri, libertatem opprimi ... cives in servitutem distrahi a complexu suorum, distubari tecta, diripi fortunas, fana atque templa dirui, occisionem fieri, rapi ad stuprum virgines, ingenuos, matres familias, penates, aras, focos, seplucra maiorum corrumpi, postremo igni, cruore, luctu ubique passim omnia compleri."

The layout of Naples and Capua is a key component in understanding how the prolonged conflict for that city between French and Aragonese troops transpired. Rucellai begins his account of these engagements with an extensive description of the bay that includes both a physical description and its history.

Naples is a most ancient city of Campania situated near the lower sea out from the area of the famous island of Capri where Augustus Tiberius took his retirement. This city is surrounded and fortified by its position, its walls and a port; the second shore from the south is bent in the shape of (two) horns for the purpose of letting out the sea, which, with the structure of vast works stretching out to the West and to the port Pozzuoli is the head of shipping. The rest of the body of the city is stretched out on the continent slowly stretching from the deepest point into the peak with a surging incline and the location of the hill making it very safe and well fortified.⁴⁷¹

Rucellai then directly asks the reader to imagine himself (*circumspectaveris*) at a high place or a high-point looking down upon the bay, and describes the aerial view as "much like a scorpion."⁴⁷² This view brings the different landscape features all "before the eyes" (*ante ponere oculos*) of a reader offering the best explanation for understanding the location and context of a prolonged battle. A privileged vantage point provides the reader with a global perspective from which to examine causes, just as the wise leader looks beyond immediate concerns to see the distant future as if from on high.⁴⁷³ The reader, however, is not encouraged to maintain that distant relationship to events as they are narrated in the text. Rather, Rucellai employs evocative description to turn the reader or listener into a spectator of the destruction wreaked by armies on Italian soil. The spectator

⁴⁷¹*Ibid.*, Par. 99: "Neapolis Campaniae vetustissima urbs ad mare inferum posita e regione Caprearum insulae secessu Tiberii Augusti inclytæ. Haec situ, moenibus, portu succincta communitaque a meridie secundum litus in cornua circumflectitur ad misso mari, quae molibus immensi operis productis occidentem versus et Puteolos portum efficiunt quantavis capacem navium. Caeterum corpus urbis extenditur in continentem molliter ab imo usque in verticem assurgente clivo; productoque in arctum simul atque editiorem collis locum, unde praecipiti dejectu tutus quam masime redditur."

⁴⁷²*Ibid.*: "Formam si vel ex alto, vel e specula circumspectaveris, scorpionis maxime effigiem praebebet."

⁴⁷³*Ibid.*, Par. 12: "neque tantum quod in propinquo foret, sed veluti ex alta specula quam longissime provideret."

then creates a wrinkle in time, bringing something from the past into the present.⁴⁷⁴ This thick, vivid description is intended to show the horror of military conflict and to demonstrate that security, rather than honour, is the more important concern for rulers. *De bello italico* adopts an historical rhetoric founded on visual and experiential components.

For instance, Bernardo Rucellai creates a sense of pathos in his depiction of the *furia francese*. He appeals to the readers' emotions in his descriptions of the French, the destruction at the Battle of Fornovo and the massacres at San Giovanni and Gaeta. In paragraph 96, he directly addresses the readers in order to describe the destruction wrought upon the Italian countryside by the French forces in terms of both sights, sounds and smells (of fire):

You would believe that the Gauls, wherever they went, scoured far and wide with horses and men ... [T]he castles were deserted, the houses and fields were abandoned, and also the altars and hearths neglected; Old men, women and children were dragged here and there into wooded areas; strong men fled to the cities and everything seemed to roar aloud, to echo and to rage, the towns seemed filled with horrible cries, with smoke by day and fire by night; frequent were the watchtowers, as the torches burned.⁴⁷⁵

Rucellai employs Sallust's typical usage of asyndeton and lists of historical infinitives to create a sense of immediacy and urgency in the French advance and the reactions of the inhabitants. Rucellai opens the description with a direct appeal to the reader -- "you

⁴⁷⁴ On *enargeia* see Heinrich F. Plett, *Enargeia in Classical Antiquity and the Early Modern Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), esp. 7-28.

⁴⁷⁵ Rucellai, *De bello italico*, Par. 96: "Crederes Gallos, quacumque irent, equis virisque long ac late fuso agmine immensum obtinentes loci, peragrasse, non invasisse Campaniam ceteramque adiacentem oram, ubertate agrorum opulentam, quae mare attingit, adeo consternatis omnium animis vel nullo ultra obsistente aut demorante iter agmen processit. ... Itaque castella deserui, tectas villasque relinqui, aris atque focus posthabitis, senes, mulieres, impuberes saltuosa in loca passim trahi, validos ad oppida confugere, videri cuncta obstrepere, circumsonare, fremere, ululatu horrifico oppida pagosque compleri, fumo interdiu, noctu igne, speculae crebrae existere facesque collucere."

would believe that" — a technique that he employs on multiple occasions to create a sense of *pathos* and transform the reader into a spectator.⁴⁷⁶

The first example of large-scale carnage and destruction that *De bello italico* recounts is that of the massacre at San Giovanni when Charles VIII and his troops first arrive in Campania in 1495. Babies were ripped from the arms of crying mothers and killed before their very eyes and nuns were taken from their convents and cut down. Rucellai again emphasises the sounds of the horrors mixed together:

In this no variety of cruelty was passed over. Little children were snatched from the bosom of their parents for slaves: parents were slaughtered before the eyes of their children: wretched mothers, torn from the embrace of their newborns, waiting in vain with silent piety in order that it might be possible to receive the last breath of their children for themselves; Vestal virgins were extracted in full view from the innermost sanctuary and slaughtered in the lap of the Gods they tended; Cries, moans and groans were mixed together in the whole city.⁴⁷⁷

The killing is depicted as indiscriminate and done without regard for the social status or age of the victims. The image of babies wrenched from mothers' breasts would likely have evoked the Massacre of the Innocents (*Matthew* 2:16-18) and created a parallel between King Herod and King Charles VIII. There is no glory to be had for the French in this account of the conflict, merely horror and carnage.

The description of the Battle of Fornovo is another incident in which Rucellai emphasises that in violence the differences between social classes are erased and disorder reigns:

⁴⁷⁶ See for example *Ibid.*, par. 81, 99, 107, 114, 151.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Par. 94: "In quo nullum taeterrimae crudelitatis genus praetermissum: parvi liberi de parentum sinu abrepti in servitutum, parentes in oculis filiorum trucidati, matres miserae a novissimo complexu liberorum exclusae, tacita pietate frustra expectantes ut filiorum extremum spiritum excipere sibi liceret, Vestales trepidae a penetralibus extractae, in conspectu gremioque deorum, quos ipsae colebant, trucidatae, fletus, lamentatio, gemitus tota urbe permixtus."

Now the entire battle line is diffused, alike in wavering, and unexpectedly it masses together with a storm breaking out so that, unless by the emblems of the weapons flowing between people, otherwise the Gaul is very little distinguished from the Italian. Fresh soldiers enter into both battle lines exhausted by much death and more flight among the lightning bolts and thunderclaps, and the battle rages on. Mixed together, the cavalry and the infantry are spread out and crushed according to the nature of the place or the boldness of the enemy. Nor does such a battle rage by means of sword and spear but also by means of the shields of men and the breasts of driven forward horses.⁴⁷⁸

Corpses are mixed together and indistinguishable from the machines of war: “The muddy plain was strewn, length and breadth, with the cadavers of men and beasts mixed together and a great abundance of arms and siege engines; meanwhile, the ground was fuming with gore and spoiled, putrid matter.”⁴⁷⁹ The carnage strewn across the battlefield is firmly decried as the responsibility of the French forces. In the end, as we saw above, there is no clear victor⁴⁸⁰ Military conflict, in *De bello italico*, is gruesome and horrible.

iii) Structure

The structure of the *De bello italico* emphasises the simultaneity and complexity of historical events. Causes are rarely unambiguous and Rucellai goes to great pains to demonstrate that the actions of individuals are the result of differing motives. This aspect of the text is one of the many ways in which Rucellai problematizes the historical craft and its edifying aims.

⁴⁷⁸*Ibid.*, Par. 111: “Confunditur iam tota acies fluctuanti similis conglobaturque, subito coorto imbri, ut, nisi armorum insignibus interfulgentibus, cetera Gallus ab Italo minime dinosceretur, cum multa caede, maiore fuga, inter fulmina et tonitrua, exinanitam utramque aciem invadit recens miles proeliumque exhorrescit. Eques pedesque permixtus substernitur obteriturque, pro loci natura aut hostis audacia, nec Mars tantum saevit hasta et gladio, sed virorum equorumque scutis pectoribusque propellentium.”

⁴⁷⁹*Ibid.*, Par. 119: “Constrata longe lateque planities limosa erat permixto cadavere hominum iumentorumque, armorum tormentorumque magna copia.”

⁴⁸⁰*Ibid.*, Par. 118: “Nam sicut aequata ferme pugna, ita clade pari discessum. Raro alias tantis animis iustae concurrerunt acies. Permulti vulnerati, pauci, pro numero interfectorum, capti: sola enim morte vinci destinassi animis videbantur. Galli, barbarie inveterata nihil reliqui ad saevitiem facientes, exemplo simul et irritamento Italici fuere...”

When analysing the factors that bring about a series of historical events, Rucellai provides conflicting explanations before providing his own interpretation. For example, when discussing Louis XI's motivations for sending his young son, Charles VIII, away from the French court for his education, Rucellai provides three possible interpretations:

He, [Louis XI of France], because he had been sick a long time with epilepsy, begot a son ... Here opinion varies. Some say that he was educated humbly because the king did not suffer to be seen in public that almost most unnatural boy who would be advancing to rule. Others say that Louis, astute as he was and showing his own religiosity, wanted to augment the mystery around the boy, wanting to encourage the people in their belief that the boy was chosen by God. But, as I believe, the strongest, most steadfast mind inclines towards that rumour which I received from a better source, that Louis, aware of his impiety. ...[and] thinking this, that after his death he would be safe from internal sedition if the most powerful and noble did not have any authority in hand, and they were kept away from any royal luxury.⁴⁸¹

In this way, the author establishes that he is providing his readers with many possible interpretations of events along with historical actors' motivations and not merely his own. The complexity of causes makes it difficult to extrapolate moral lessons from *De bello italico*.

In parallel, Rucellai emphasises the simultaneity of events through his diction and syntax. For example, in order to transition from a discussion of Florentine domestic politics back to Alfonso's preparations for war, Rucellai uses the conjunction *interea*:

Meanwhile, Alfonso, who as we have shown above, preferred anything to leisure and calm, returned back to health when he recognized that nothing

⁴⁸¹*Ibid.*, Par. 15-6: "Is, propterea quod morbo comitali diu laborasset, filium haud iusto corporis habitu genuit. ... Hic varia fama est: alii quod indecentis formae ac paene monstrosum puerum successurum regno in publico conspici rex gravaretur, humiliter educatum fuisse aiunt; alii, ut erat Alovysius ingenio callido atque religionis ostentator, servandam quasi in arcanis altam indolem voluisse ad iniiciendam superstitiosis populis religionem inesse aliquid numinis adulto filio ... Verum illa fama constantior, atque ut credam potissimum inclinatur animus, quod a maioribus natu accepi: Alovysium, suae impietatis conscium, quippe qui a patre iam inde ab adolescentia defecisset, ne idem filius perpetraret per custodiam obscuri generis hominum praecaveri sibi voluisse, simul et regno consulere, quod post eius obitum quam maxime tutum ab intestinis seditionibus fore existimabat, si potentioribus ac summo loco natis nulla accederet auctoritas proculque ab omni cultu regiae stirpis abfuissent."

was sufficiently constant against Charles, that the garrisons of the Florentines, whom he had relied on greatly, stood for the Gauls; that Alexander, wavering, had shifted; that his [men] were built up in hope of new things; at last that the garrisons were about to follow the enemy, all of them about to turn against him.⁴⁸²

Here again, Rucellai is at pains to demonstrate the complexity of causes. It is not one factor, but three that encourage him in his endeavour to withstand the French advance.

Later in the text, in order to bridge a description of the heroic deeds of Giovanni di Capua with the account of the massacre at Gaeta, he employs the conjunction *interim*. The transition is stark and undermines the possibilities for honour in military service. Indeed, *interim* appears nine more times throughout the text in ways that suggest the actors' lack of control over their situation, unable as they are to foresee the actions of others.⁴⁸³

Rucellai emphasises the chaotic, hectic nature of events in two main ways: by means of adverbs or adverbial phrases of simultaneity or temporal proximity and present ablative absolute constructions. The abundance of these words of simultaneity creates an unrelenting pace to the narrative that is further amplified by its linear quality.⁴⁸⁴ These conjunctive adverbs and phrases emphasise the hectic, overwhelming nature of events as they unfold. On the other hand, Rucellai refrains from breaking his linear narrative.⁴⁸⁵

The combination of a very quick pace with complex causal analysis makes it difficult (in a very practical sense) to draw clear moral lessons from *De bello italico*. Rucellai is not

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, Par. 86: "Interea Alfonsus, quem omnia quam otium ac quietem malle supra ostendimus, ubi nihil satis firmum contra Carolum esse cognovit, Florentinorum praesidia, quibus maxime confisus fuerat, pro Gallis stare, Alexandrum nutantem tergiversari, suos erectos in spem novarum rerum, postremo hosti secunda, sibi adversa omnia, ad sanitatem rediit."

⁴⁸³ See for example *Ibid.*, Par. 26, Par. 29, Par. 38, Par. 45, Par. 51, Par. 56, Par. 88, Par. 124 and Par. 125.

⁴⁸⁴ Rucellai uses the words *dum*, *igitur*, *interea*, *hoc interim tempore*, *ut redeam unde*, *postero die*, *insequenti nocte* or ablative absolutes using a present participle as transitions between paragraphs on fourteen occasions: *Ibid.*, Par. 22; Par. 26; Par. 29; Par. 38; Par. 39; Par. 45; Par. 48; Par. 51; Par. 56; Par. 86; Par. 88; Par. 122; Par. 130; Par. 150;

⁴⁸⁵ Rucellai makes three exceptions for very brief contextual interludes: first, to examine Capponi's diplomatic intervention with Charles VIII on behalf of the Florentines (par. 82); to introduce Holy Roman Imperial power in Italy (par. 83); then; and last to discuss the character and physical description of Charles VIII upon his retreat from Italy (par. 128).

providing an account about the nature of princes but rather a detailed analysis of the political causes for military conflict. The deeds speak for themselves; what is to be emulated in this text is failed ambitions. The rulers' goals are thwarted by the complexity and rapid pace of events as they unfold.

Through his appropriation of Sallustian style and his use of various rhetorical devices, Rucellai provides his readers with an emotional and yet well-informed testimony of the Italian campaign. Rucellai sets the events of 1494-5 "before the eyes" of his reader in a way that purports to offer moral exempla and yet elicits a strong emotional response of horror or dismay at carnage and disorder. The emotional response undermines the possibility of moral edification. Being both a humanist steeped in classical tradition and a first-hand witness to the chaos of warfare, his account betrays an underlying tension between the hopes of historians and the limitations of reality.

iv) Tone

Whether or not Rucellai believed in the ability of history to inspire political leaders to virtuous rule would, at first glance, be an odd question to pose. Yet the usefulness of history is not as clear-cut as one would expect from Rucellai's stated aims. The best example of this ambivalence is evident in his recounting of events of mid-November 1494, when Bernardo Rucellai and Bartolommeo Buondelmonte were sent by the Florentine government to negotiate with Charles VIII whose forces were camped at Signa in the Tuscan countryside. Rucellai provides an account of their meeting that is detailed and written in direct discourse. Indeed, it is one of only three examples of direct discourse in the text.⁴⁸⁶ In order to dissuade the French monarch from attacking Florence,

⁴⁸⁶ The three notable exceptions are: the negotiations between himself and Bartolomeo Buondelmonti with Charles VIII at Signa on 15 November 1494, Giuliano della Rovere's speech of encouragement to the French

the diplomats invoke the example of an historical figure, Charlemagne, “whose name and valour” Charles VIII shared.⁴⁸⁷ The diplomats remind the French monarch that his ancestor, Charlemagne, when he saw the devastation wrought on Florence by the Scythians, the Goths and the Huns, sought to restore the city’s dignity and authority by means of laws and statutes. The fifteenth-century Florentines place themselves in a comparable position towards the current French monarch:

You [Charles VIII], after your arrival, have once more made the city whole and free, and in doing so you have gained for yourself a place among the immortals. Therefore, it is to you alone that we owe the restitution of our land, city, state and freedom, than which nothing more beautiful was ever given to men by the Gods. And we shall show you our gratitude howsoever we shall be able to do so, with our hearts as well as with our property, if indeed it is permitted for man, with good faith alone, to obtain gifts that were divine. Finally, we desire this profoundly: that you be convinced that the Florentines will refuse no condition you impose on them – provided it does not damage the republic.⁴⁸⁸

Charles VIII is unmoved by this plea for help in restoring the republican tradition in Florence. Indeed, although he compliments the diplomats on the style and construction of their speech, he rebuffs their overtures for friendship for a third time and insists on Florentine aid in his campaign against Ferdinand of Naples. The Florentines, when they hear this news, prepare for siege.

As we can see here, the French monarch is not persuaded by historical example.

Indeed, he argues that his majesty behooves the Florentines to acquiesce to his demands.

troops, and Louis XII’s ‘parable of the snakes’ on the disunion of the states of Italy. The *oratio recta* was a commonplace of ancient historiography and although Rucellai’s use of *oratio obliqua* (paraphrasing) in important episodes undercut the overall vividness and immediacy of the account, it served to assert his truthfulness and authority over the material being narrated. See McCuaig, “Bernardo Rucellai,” 81-2.

⁴⁸⁷*Ibid.*, Par. 67: “cuius nomen virtutemque refers.”

⁴⁸⁸*Ibid.*, Par. 67: “tu, multis magnisquetempestatibus prolapsam, rursus ut integram liberamque haberemus tuo adventu effecisti, immortalium sedem et locum consecutus. Itaque agrum, urbem, civitatem libertatemque, qua nihil praestabilius mortalibus ab immortalibus datum, tibi uni accepta referimus, gratiam reddituri quantam maximam capere animo fortunisque possumus, si fide homini liceat assequi divina munera. Postremo hoc altius in animum inducere te vehementer cupimus, Florentinos nullam condicionem recusaturos quam tu, republica incolumi, imposueris.”

Immediate gain — in this case, the wealth of Florence — figures more largely in Charles' considerations than a desire to emulate his illustrious ancestor and participate in his worldly fame. Exemplary theory, in this instance, failed Bernardo Rucellai.

The parable of the serpents that concludes *De bello italico* further contributes to the pessimistic tone of the work. When danger, in the form of fire, strikes the serpent den hiding under a heap of straw, the confused snakes are unable to flee to safety. The parable is explicit about the conclusions to be drawn from recent events: "men now trust in the auspices of one rather than being delayed by the caprices and distracted thoughts of so many princes."⁴⁸⁹ These concluding remarks, moreover, are attributed to an Ottoman leader, "Maumethe Othomanno," even though they are supposedly pronounced by the French King, Louis XII. In this way, *De bello italico* alludes to the very real threat that the growing Turkish empire posed to Italian sovereignty. Repelling the French invasion was not the only step in maintaining a system of self-rule by the Italian city-states. More confrontations loom on the horizon.

Bernardo Rucellai's *De bello italico* is an important work. It demonstrates the vast intellectual upheaval brought about by years of sustained military conflict on Italian soils. Underlying its ostensible use of classical tropes and styles lies a great ambivalence towards the philosophy of history espoused by the Ancients and Renaissance humanists. Bernardo Rucellai adapted a Sallustian style for a vivid portrayal of the atrocities of the Italian Wars of 1494-5 that is exceedingly complex and undermines a basic characterological interpretation of historical actors. The many, simultaneous narrative

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Par. 152: "His expositis summa animorum commutatio facta; dum magis unius auspiciis confidunt, quam tot principum studiis distractisque sententiis deterrentur."

strands presented at a break-neck pace and the sense of horror that Rucellai instills in his reader are aesthetic elements with political aims –to inspire civic harmony in the face of foreign incursion. Rucellai conceives of the Italian political community as forged by common trauma and heritage while remaining distinguishable in its constituent parts. Wise leadership is characterized by the ability to see and maintain the interconnectedness of the city-states and a healthy balance between interests.

The commentary on the Italian Wars adopts a style and perspective that emphasises the complexity of causes behind political/historical events. This complexity in turn undermines the aims of exemplary history as philosophy teaching by example. In this respect, Rucellai's text can be interpreted as part of a general shift from classical historical philosophy towards a philosophy of history as practical advice for rulers. That Bernardo Rucellai chose to write histories rather than another genre reveals that the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century was a period in which the study of politics and historical thinking increasingly went hand-in-hand. Indeed, the political problems faced by the Florentine republic challenged the traditional assumptions of Florentine life.⁴⁹⁰ Over the course of the early modern period the political thinking evident in the discussions among Florentine governors entered Western political and historical discourse and history came to be seen as offering practical advice for rulers rather than moral examples to be emulated. The political conceptual framework and historical perspective cobbled together by Renaissance humanists in the wake of the French invasions is one that modern political thought and historical narrative continue to use, albeit in very different ways.

⁴⁹⁰Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, 29.

Conclusion

As wars waged across the Italian peninsula and cities were held ransom by mercenary troops, the Florentine governing class grappled with changes in both political structure and culture. Bernardo Rucellai's *Orti Oricellari* offered a quiet space in which to converse on topics as varied as literature, music, history and contemporary politics. Visiting diplomats sat with Florentine men-of-letters, often ambassadors themselves, and shared information and insights regarding recent events. Although the exact content of their discussions remains lost to us, this dissertation has examined the historical works produced by the participants in the *Orti Oricellari* in order to analyse their changing understandings of history and community in the wake of the Italian Wars.

The most famous figure associated with the *Orti Oricellari* remains Niccolò Machiavelli, even though the man whose name became synonymous with the Devil in English as 'Old Nick' does not appear to have been among the group of regulars who attended the meetings in Bernardo Rucellai's gardens during the opening years of the early sixteenth-century. The source material examined in chapter two indicates that Machiavelli participated in the gatherings only after the re-establishment of the Medici in Florence and not during his time working for the Soderini government. Nevertheless, the young Machiavelli would have been familiar with most of the Orti participants: Florence was not so large a city and the governing class consisted of less than five thousand men. More importantly, Machiavelli was sometimes secretary for the *pratiche* meetings that Bernardo Rucellai attended between 1498 and 1502.⁴⁹¹ He may not have been on close

⁴⁹¹ Bausi, *Machiavelli*, 35; Gennaro Sasso, preface to *Consulte e Pratiche della Repubblica Fiorentina, 1498-1505*, ed. Denis Fachard (Geneva: Droz, 1993), ix.

terms with Rucellai, but he had almost certainly listened to one of his long discourses at the informal meetings of city government. Lastly, he and Francesco Vettori were close after their shared diplomatic mission to Germany in 1507.⁴⁹² In the 1520s, after Rucellai's death, Machiavelli would indeed regularly attend gatherings in the *Oricellari* gardens where "he developed his ideas in conversation, in the company of others, whom he expected to challenge his ideas, in a process that sent him back to rewrite" sections of the *Discourses on Livy*.⁴⁹³ Although his interactions with the earlier *Orti Oricellari* participants remain speculative, it is worth considering how Machiavelli's own writings draw from similar themes even as they break new ground.

To grapple with the expansive scholarship on Niccolò Machiavelli, even merely his historical thought, is a task too great for the confines of this dissertation.⁴⁹⁴ An early (1504), little-treated work of Machiavelli's, however, offers an interesting vantage point from which to briefly examine the depiction of history, community and governance in his early thought, before torture and exile, and in relation to Bernardo Rucellai's *De bello italico*.⁴⁹⁵ The *Decennale primo*, written in vernacular Tuscan and rhyming tercets, offers

⁴⁹² Their correspondence has been the subject of a detailed study, see Najemy, *Between Friends*; Rosemary Devonshire Jones, "Some Observations on the Relations Between Francesco Vettori and Niccolò Machiavelli during the Embassy to Maximilian I," *Italian Studies* 23:1 (1968): 93-113.

⁴⁹³ Christopher S. Celenza, *Machiavelli: A Portrait* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2015), 122.

⁴⁹⁴ With the 500th anniversary of the composition of *Il Principe* in 1513, conferences were held at Harvard, Columbia, Brandeis and Duke in commemoration and there has been an outpouring of scholarship. The most recent, note-worthy contributions include *Italian Culture* 32:2 (September 2014), an issue devoted entirely to Machiavelli; Maria Cristina Figorilli, "I ritmi del segretario e i tempi dello scrittore," in *Festina Lente: Il tempo della scrittura nella letteratura del Cinquecento*, ed. Chiara Cassiani and Maria Cristina Figorilli (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2014): 135-164; and Celenza, *Machiavelli: A Portrait*. See also Robert Black, *Machiavelli* (London: Routledge, 2013); Francesco Bausi, *Machiavelli* (Roma: Salerno Editrice, 2005); Sebastian de Grazia, *Machiavelli in Hell* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989); Gennaro Sasso, *Niccolò Machiavelli: Storia del suo pensiero politico* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1980); Nicolai Rubinstein, "Machiavelli storico," *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Giovanni Ciapelli III (Rome: Edizioni di storia e della letteratura, 2004): 171-204.

⁴⁹⁵ Celenza, *Machiavelli*, 122. See also Gennaro Sasso, "Brevi considerazioni sugli Orti Oricellari," in *Machiavelli e gli antichi e altri saggi I* (Milan and Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1987): 353-357.

a poetic account of the ten years of warfare on the Italian peninsula that began in 1494 and extended to the disastrous Florentine attempt to capture Pisa by diverting the Arno.⁴⁹⁶ The dissimilarities between the two accounts in terms of register, language and style are as striking as their shared basic assumptions about the difficulties facing effective political leadership and a pessimistic outlook on what the future might hold for the Italian city-states.

Whereas Rucellai's *De bello italico* is written in a highly classicized Latin prose-style that readily integrates itself into the classical tradition, Machiavelli's *Decennale primo* recounts a decade of destruction in *terza rima* of Tuscan vernacular – the form and language adopted by Dante Alighieri in his *Commedia*.⁴⁹⁷ It is not a good example of the distinct, pithy style for which Machiavelli is so famous in *Il Principe*, and the poem is peppered with many direct borrowings from Dante as well as other famous Florentine and ancient authors.⁴⁹⁸ It is a noticeable characteristic of Machiavelli's that he often eschews classical models when other Italian writers of the era, like Rucellai, embraced them.⁴⁹⁹ Anna Maria Cabrini has argued that these citations should be interpreted sarcastically as subverting the epic genre by using Dantean rhyming patterns and vocabulary in an inappropriate context to comic effect. Cabrini posits that readers of the

⁴⁹⁶ Leonardo da Vinci and Machiavelli may have collaborated on the construction of a canal to cut off the Pisan water supply. Eighty workers were killed during a violent storm when the walls of the ditches collapsed. The failed attempt cost the Florentine government seven thousand *ducati* in an era of financial crisis. See Roger D. Masters, *Fortune is a River: Leonardo da Vinci and Niccolò Machiavelli's Magnificent Dream to Change the Course of Florentine History* (New York: The Free Press, 1998).

⁴⁹⁷ See A. Quaglio, "Dante e Machiavelli," *Cultura e Scuola* 9 (1970): 160-173; Mario Martelli, "Dante e Machiavelli," *Schede Umanistiche* 1:1 (1999), 6-9.

⁴⁹⁸ On Machiavelli's role in the development of Tuscan vernacular as a literary language, see Cecil Grayson, "Lorenzo, Machiavelli and the Italian Language," *Italian Renaissance Studies*, ed. E. F. Jacob (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960), 425-432.

⁴⁹⁹ Nicolai Rubinstein, "Problems of Evidence in the History of Political Ideas," in *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Giovanni Capelli (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2004), I, 345-6.

Decennale primo would have recognized that the numerous allusions to Dante's *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* in Machiavelli's poem were not consistent with the subject matter being treated.⁵⁰⁰

While Dante's masterpiece does offer a vision of the after-life and the process whereby Christians are delivered from a state of sin and brought into union with God, it nevertheless remains overtly intertwined with Dante's politics.⁵⁰¹ In both his political letters and *Commedia* uses political invective to express frustration at the political instability of Italy.⁵⁰² Indeed, Barbara Reynolds, in her recent biography, argues for an interpretation of Dante as truly radical thinker who sought to enact real social change through poetry.⁵⁰³ To mention merely the most famous of examples, the sixth canto of *Purgatorio* includes an explicit exhortation to Italy, the Emperor and Florence comparing political instability to the tossing and turning of an invalid unable to find respite among the bed linens.⁵⁰⁴ Similarly, *Decennale primo* treats what Machiavelli describes as the "vexations of Italy" over the past ten years in his dedicatory letter. The very first words

⁵⁰⁰ Anna Maria Cabrini, "Intorno al primo *Decennale*," *Rinascimento* 33 (1993): 69-89. Nietzsche also noted Machiavelli's distinct style of presenting "heavy, difficult thoughts" with the "best, wantonest humour." Frederick Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Helen Zimmern, in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Oscar Levy, (Edinburgh and London: T. N. Foulis, 1923), Vol. 12, 28.

⁵⁰¹ The scholarship on Dante may rival that on Machiavelli. See for example, Joan M. Ferrante, *The Political Vision of the Divine Comedy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); Claire Honess, "The Language(s) of Civic Invective in Dante: Rhetoric, Satire, and Politics," *Italian Studies* 68:2 (2013): 157-174; John A. Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); Craig Kallendorf, "Virgil, Dante and Empire in Italian Thought, 1300-1500," *Vergilius* 34 (1988): 44-69; Charles Till Davis, *Dante and the Idea of Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957); Alessandro Passerin d'Entrèves, *Dante as a Political Thinker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); John Freccero, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Dante, Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the Divine Comedy* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1979).

⁵⁰² Honess, "The Language(s) of Civic Invective," 174.

⁵⁰³ Barbara Reynolds, *Dante: The Poet, the Political Thinker, the Man* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006).

⁵⁰⁴ Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio* in *La Commedia di Dante Alighieri*, ed. and trans. Simone Marchesi (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 2011), vol. 2, canto VI, 97-100: "E se ben ti ricordi e vedi lume / vedrai te somigliante a quella inferma / che non può trovar posa in su le piume, / ma con dar volta suo dolore scherma."

of the poem itself assert the woeful nature of its narrative: “I shall sing Italian hardships.”⁵⁰⁵ Although throughout the text, the city-states are depicted as individual actors, it is *Italy* as a whole that suffered. The situation at the end of the poem remains dire as Venice sits on the brink of war and the Florentines’ immoderate desire to control Pisa keeps tensions brewing and undermines attempts to maintain a peaceful status quo.⁵⁰⁶ While *Decennale primo* is no tale of divine salvation, it remains as much a memorial to the imperfection the secular government as the work on which it models itself.

Machiavelli’s description of the events of the decade preceding 1504 emphasises how petty conflicts and fear dominated the political landscape. “Discordant Italy” is personified as a woman who has “opened into herself a passage for the Gauls and suffered barbarian peoples to trample her down.”⁵⁰⁷ These lines sound strikingly similar to Bernardo Rucellai’s opening remarks in *De bello italico*. The two authors, however, appear to have intended their works for different audiences. Whereas Rucellai proposes to record the recent infamy for future generations, likening his work to that of a classical sculptor, Machiavelli addresses *Decennale primo* to a specific individual and member of the governing class, Alammano Salviati, and proceeds to address the readers in the second-person plural thirty-six times over 550 lines of verse and always with reference to decisions or actions made by the Florentines.⁵⁰⁸ Gennaro Sasso interprets the last verses

⁵⁰⁵ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Decennale primo* in *Opere*, ed. Corrado Vivanti, vol. 1 (Turin: Einaudi-Gallimard, 1997), v.1: “Io canterò l’italice fatiche.”

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, vv. 535-539.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, vv. 16-18: “quando in sé discordante Italia aperse / la via a’ galli, e quando esser calpesta / da le genti barbariche sofferse.”

⁵⁰⁸ Alamanno Salviati sat as a member of the *Dieci* four times during Soderini’s office and held considerable political power. Butters, *Governors and Government*, 63-66; Humfrey C. Butters,

of the *Decennale primo* as a direct reference to Salviati's role in the current government and a critical, ironic depiction of Piero Soderini.⁵⁰⁹ He explicitly condemns Florentine policy, especially with respect to Pisa, and ridicules the government's reactions to the Italian Wars: "Yet while in the Kingdom there was strife between Saint Mark and France ... you stood there with open mouth to wait for someone coming from France who would bring you manna in the desert."⁵¹⁰ This complete identification of the readers with the Florentines, combined with his use of the Tuscan vernacular, makes clear that *Decennale primo* was intended for a Florentine readership with some political power.

The second-person *singular* reader of *De bello italico*, on the other hand, while oftentimes invited to imagine a scene, is never held accountable for the deeds of the past. Through the use of vivid description and hectic pacing and transitions, Rucellai constructs an emotionally-charged narrative, but one in which the reader is not expected to have participated. *De bello italico* was not printed during Rucellai's life, nor that of his children and exists in only two sixteenth-century manuscripts.⁵¹¹ A speculative conclusion is that Rucellai did not intend the work to be read by his contemporaries. Regardless, it is not addressed to a specific political group or community, but rather a wider audience. The choice of a classicising Latin, a language he refused to speak to

"Machiavelli and the Medici," in *Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*, ed. John M. Najemy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 64-79.

⁵⁰⁹ Gennaro Sasso, "Per alcuni versi del primo *Decennale*," in *Machiavelli e gli antichi e altri saggi* (Milan and Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1987): II, 165-196.

⁵¹⁰ Machiavelli, *Decennale primo*, vv. 109-114: "Voi vi posavi qui col becco aperto / Per attender di Francia un che venisse / A portarvi la manna nel deserto." See also vv. 67-69; 244-246; 280-288; 319-330.

⁵¹¹ See above, p. ???

Erasmus in 1506 -- rather than the vernacular made this text easily approachable to educated people across Europe.⁵¹²

Both authors depict the political leaders of their era as self-interested and overwhelmed by events beyond their reach. In *Decennale primo* the various political actors are often identified by their symbolically-associated animals (Viper – Visconti; Wolf – Siena; Panther – Lucca; Calf – General Vitello; Bear – the Orsini; Cocks – France, etc.). When describing the Florentines’ successful negotiation with Charles VIII in October 1494, Machiavelli writes that “the clangor of arms and of horses was not loud enough to keep unheard the voice of one capon (Piero Capponi) among a hundred gamecocks; so the proud King left, after he learned that the city, in maintaining her freedom, was united.”⁵¹³ Although the use of animal symbols might oftentimes be the result of metrical constraints, it nevertheless draws attention to the violent and emotional motivations behind the conflicts: “You were unarmed and always in great terror of the horn that was left to the Calf, and feared the Bear and the Pope.”⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, the poem conveys a sense of the compression of time by means of frequent elision, diction and metaphors of light and speed and, according Barbara J. Godorecci, the *terza rima* form itself.⁵¹⁵ Rucellai similarly draws attention to flaws in political decision-making and is unequivocal in his condemnation of Alexander VI. However, he emphasises the complex and hectic nature of the French descent into Italy. *De bello italico* implies,

⁵¹² de Nolhac, *Erasme en Italie*, 47-8.

⁵¹³ See above, pg. ??? Machiavelli, *Decennale primo*, vv. 34-39: “la voce di un Cappon fra cento galli; / tanto che il re superbo fe’ partita, / poscia che la cittate essere intese / per mantener sua libertate unita.”

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vv. 319-321: “eri sanz’arme e ‘n gran timore stavi / pel corno che al Vitello era rimaso / e dell’Orso e del papa dubitavi.”

⁵¹⁵ Barbara J. Godorecci, “Beyond Limits: Time, Space, Language in Machiavelli’s *Decennali*,” in *The Comedy and Tragedy of Machiavelli: Essays on the Literary Works*, ed. Vickie B. Sullivan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 174.

through its grammar and structure, that even the wisest of rulers would be hard-pressed to cope with the rapid advance of an invading army on multiple fronts.

Machiavelli and Rucellai both attribute the successful Florentine negotiation for peace with Charles VIII in October 1494 to Piero Capponi.⁵¹⁶ Contrary to this appraisal, contemporary scholars attribute Savonarola's rise to prominence as a result of the prestige accrued from his personal encounter with the French king.⁵¹⁷ Rucellai's political opposition to the Dominican friar and his supporters might account for this inconsistency, but Machiavelli praises the preacher and criticizes his opponents:

I speak of that great Savonarola who, inspired with heavenly vigour, kept you closely bound with his words. But many feared to see their country ruined, little by little, under his prophetic teaching; hence no ground for your reunion could be discovered, unless his divine light continued to increase, or unless by a greater fire it was extinguished.⁵¹⁸

Years later, in *Discorsi*, Machiavelli further praised Savonarola saying that so great a man must only be spoken of with reverence whose works demonstrate the learning, prudence and virtue [*virtù*] of his character.⁵¹⁹ It thus seems unlikely that Machiavelli would also have deliberately mis-attributed Piero Capponi with the Florentine-French settlement.

With this opposing treatment of Savonarola, the starkest contrast between Rucellai and Machiavelli becomes apparent. Rucellai's *De bello italico* depicts religious

⁵¹⁶ Machiavelli, *Decennale primo*, vv. 34-39; Rucellai, *De bello italico*, para. 75.

⁵¹⁷ Weinstein, *Savonarola*, 67-111; Polizzotto, *The Elect Nation*, 8-53; Martines, *Fire in the City*, 34-58.

⁵¹⁸ Machiavelli, *Decennale primo*, vv. 157-165: "io dico di quel gran Savonerola / el qual, afflato da virtù divina, / vi tenne involti con la sua parola. / Ma perché molti temean la ruina / veder de la lor patria, a poco a poco / sotto la sua profetica dottrina, / non si trovava a riunirvi loco / se non cresceva o se non era spento / el suo lume divin con maggior foco."

⁵¹⁹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, in *Opere*, ed. Corrado Vivanti, vol. 1 (Turin: Einaudi-Gallimard, 1997), I, 11; *Ibid.*, III, 45: "frate Girolamo Savonerola, gli scritti del quale mostrono la dottrina, la prudenza, e la virtù dello animo suo."

involvement in secular politics as the worst characteristic of the age. Machiavelli echoes that sentiment in the opening sections of the *Discorsi* with respect to fifteenth-century Italy, but the *Discorsi* also argue for the essential, instrumental role of religion in political life.⁵²⁰ *Il principe* demonstrates a deep respect for the ambitious and driven political leader, ruthless in his maintenance of power and explains Savonarola's undoing as the inevitable result of being an "unarmed prophet."⁵²¹ Machiavelli's praise for the Dominican Friar in his *Decennale primo* is consistent with his other works.⁵²²

Machiavelli and Rucellai both set out to record events that they personally witnessed. Their narratives depict the harsh reality of politics and the challenges faced by any would-be leader: factionalism, fear and uncertainty. *De bello italico* and *Decennale primo* offer narratives of what was rather than what should have been.⁵²³ Although it is not especially evident in this early work, theorists have pointed to the radical nature of Machiavelli's understanding of conflict as unavoidable. Political theorist Bonnie Honig has gone so far as to divide political thinkers into two camps (virtue vs. *virtù*) based on their stance towards this position with Machiavelli as the founder of the *virtù* group.⁵²⁴

Machiavelli, we have seen, was not alone among his contemporaries in understanding the

⁵²⁰ Isaiah Berlin, "The Originality of Machiavelli," in *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 146; Nathan Markov, "Machiavelli's Critique of Religion," *Social Research* 81:1 (2014): 193-216; Benedetto Fontana, "Love of Country and Love of God: The Political Uses of Religion in Machiavelli," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60:4 (1999): 639-658;

⁵²¹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, in *Opere*, ed. Corrado Vivanti, vol. 1 (Turin: Einaudi-Gallimard, 1997), 6.

⁵²² Celenza, *Machiavelli: A Portrait*, 122-128; Marcia L. Colish, "Republicanism, Religion, and Machiavelli's Savonarolan Moment," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60:4 (1999): 597-616.

⁵²³ Francis Bacon and Friedrich Meinecke are two of the most famous exponents of Machiavelli as the origin of *Realpolitik* whereas Isaiah Berlin, Felix Gilbert, Gennaro Sasso and, most recently, Christopher Celenza emphasise the extent to which Machiavelli must also be understood as a product of his age. Francis Bacon, *On the Advancement of Learning* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955), II, 21, 9; Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'État and Its Place in Modern History*, trans. Douglas Scott (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

⁵²⁴ Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), 1-17. The best (but dated) overview of the many interpretations of Machiavelli remains Isaiah Berlin, "The Originality of Machiavelli."

power dynamics between members of a community as constantly in flux. Rucellai's metaphorical use of a body metaphor in a state of balance in *De bello italico* and Bartolommeo della Fonte's association of the role of the historian with that of the physician imply that they too considered peace and stability to be a temporary state. Long ago, Denys Hay alerted us role of morale in the political crisis in Italy of the fifteenth-century. A Renaissance-era Scipio never emerged to save the tradition of Italian self-governance and Rucellai and Machiavelli were acutely aware of the failures of their political and military leaders. Their criticisms, however, are levied against specific Italian leaders rather than the troops themselves or their militaristic culture.⁵²⁵

Christopher S. Celenza claims that "Machiavelli's basic, bedrock assumption [is that] the study of history should be combined with analysis of current events." The members of the *OrtiOricellari* would have shared that assumption. Even as they translated and lectured on ancient historians and expounded a classical philosophy of history teaching by example, they also sought to memorialise their own era in biographies, annals and histories. Unfortunately, Francesco Vettori remains outside the scope of this dissertation. His *Sommario* is a detailed account of Hapsburg-Valois political and military conflict from 1511 to 1527.⁵²⁶ Like Rucellai before him, Vettori draws on extensive, often first-hand diplomatic experience and depicts the horrors of war waged against local populations rather than between mercenary armies. Vettori recounts what was rather than what might or should have been and bluntly tells his readers the historical

⁵²⁵ Hale, "War and Opinion," 115-122.

⁵²⁶ See R. J. F. Hughes, "Francesco Vettori: His Place in Florentine Diplomacy and Politics" (Ph.D diss., London University, 1958), later published as Rosemary Devonshire Jones, *Francesco Vettori: Florentine Citizen and Medici Servant* (London: The Athlone Press, 1972), but without the integrated discussion of the *Sommario*.

evidence shows that “all governments are tyrannical.”⁵²⁷ His *Sommario* was composed decades after the *Orti* gatherings and after the death of most of the participants. It nevertheless reflects some of the same themes addressed by Rucellai, but with an emphasis on finance and credit. His account of the sack of Rome in 1527 by the largely Lutheran army focuses on the wealth and riches plundered, occupies the last passages of the work and is offered as a concluding statement that is highly critical of the clergy: “This as an example that arrogant, avaricious, murderous, jealous, lecherous and treacherous men, cannot maintain themselves long. God often punishes them.”⁵²⁸ The participants in the *Orti* demonstrate Eric Cochrane’s claim that historical writing was not solely the domain of towering giants like Machiavelli, Paolo Giovio and Benedetto Varchi, and that the French invasion served to revitalize a humanist historiography “dying of inanition” by providing it with political and philosophical utility.⁵²⁹

Beyond its rediscovery of much of the classical heritage and its contributions to our understanding of that culture, the Renaissance appetite for the past led to new ways of thinking about history and community, with a strong sense of the frailty of the political leader in the face of fortune and a new-found concern for the plight of the local population in times of conflict. It is worth reviewing how this dissertation has sought to buttress this latter idea. Chapter one provided an overview of the largest contextual setting for the works being studied: the French campaign of 1494. It argued that the

⁵²⁷ Francesco Vettori, “Sommario,” 145: “tutti i governi sono tirannici.”

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, 244: “Questo fu esempio che li uomini superbi, avari, omicidi, invidiosi, libidinosi e simulatori, non possono manternersi lungamente. Et Iddio punisce spesso quelli.”

⁵²⁹ Eric Cochrane, *Historians*, 163.

traditional, medieval historical narrative could not adequately depict the carnage and unrest that writers like Rucellai (and Machiavelli) would seek to memorialise in their historical texts. Chapter two examines the smaller social setting that fostered literary, and especially historical, production in early sixteenth-century Florence: the *Orti Oricellari*. Politicians, men-of-letters and diplomats convened within the confines of Rucellai's gardens, to share and develop ideas in conversation. These collaborative, cooperative and productive relationships perhaps offered a glimmer of hope for aspirations that the constituent members of a diverse group, the Italian city-states, with varied interests working outside the confines of strict, established political hierarchy, might nevertheless form a successful community.

Chapter three examined the life and historical works of Bartolommeo della Fonte, the professor, translator and annalist. Whereas a brief biography of his life served to demonstrate the interconnectedness of Florentine intellectuals in the fifteenth-century, the treatment of his historical philosophy and practice offered a foil against which to evaluate the changes in humanist historiography in the wake of the French invasion. In a set of orations delivered at the *studio fiorentino*, della Fonte outlined a philosophy of history that was consistent with classical precepts, but which on closer examination evinced an ambiguity in the relationship between history and rhetoric. On the eve of Charles VIII's campaign, a member of the *Orti Oricellari* was writing an annal that memorialised a distinctly Florentine focused community, one unconcerned with events outside of the high political realm. Most striking is the this-worldly character of the text: it uses secular time and eschews mention of celestial events.

Chapter four introduced the life and work of Bernardo Rucellai. An analysis of his participation in Florentine government before the election of Piero Soderini in 1502 demonstrated Rucellai's favour for a conservative government, despite his support of the expulsion of his nephew, Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici, from Florence in 1494. The constitutional reform that created a *gonfaloniere a vita* alienated Rucellai from the government of his city, at which time he first withdrew from political life into the quiet space of his gardens and then left Florence entirely until 1512. During this period of exile, Rucellai wrote *De bello italico* and circulated at least some portions of it among the *Orti Oricellari*. Rucellai returned to Florence upon the Medici restoration, but passed away shortly thereafter. A summary of the narrative arc of *De bello italico* occupied the last pages of chapter four. Chapter five delved into understandings of history and community in Rucellai's account of Charles VIII's campaign. An analysis of content, style and structure demonstrated *De bello italico*'s pessimistic outlook on the possibilities of effective political leadership as well as its overall effect of depicting a chaotic, violent world wherein peace can only ever be temporary – an evaluation of government and international relations that is surprisingly post-modern.

Bibliography

Printed Primary Sources

- Abbé de Saint-Pierre. *Project pour rendre la paix perpetuelle en Europe*. Paris: Fayard, 1986.
- Alberti, Leon Battista. *Commentarius de coniuratione Porcaria*. Edited by L. Mehus. In *Rerum Italicarum Scriptorum*, edited by L. A. Muratori, 25, 293-369. Milan: Typographia societatis Palatinae, 1751.
- Alighieri, Dante. *Purgatorio* in *La Commedia di Dante Alighieri*. Edited and translated by Simone Marchesi, vol. 2. Florence: L. S. Olschki, 2011.
- Barbaro, Nicolò. *Giornale dell'assedio di Costantinopoli*. Edited by Enrico Cornet. Vienna: Libreria Tendler & Comp., 1856.
- Burchard, Johann. *At the court of the Borgia*. Translated by Geoffrey Parker. London: The Folio Society, 1963.
- Burmans, P. (ed). *Sylloges Epistolarum a Viris Illustribus Scriptarum*, 5 vols. Leiden: 1727.
- Capponi, Gino. *Storia della repubblica di Firenze*. Florence: G. Barbèra, 1876.
- Cattani, Francesco da Diacceto. *I Tre Libri d'Amore di M. Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, filosofo et gentil'huomo fiorentino, con un Panegerico all'Amore; et con la Vita del detto autore*. Edited by Benedetto Varchi. Venezia: Gabriel Giolito, 1561,
- Cattani, Francesco da Diacceto. *Opera Omnia*. Basel: Petri et Perna, 1563.
- Cattani, Francesco da Diacceto. *Panegyrics*. In *Cambridge Translations of Renaissance Philosophical Texts*, edited by Jill Kraye and translated by Luc Deitz, 156-165. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Cerretani, Bartolomeo. *Storia fiorentina*. Edited by Giuliana Berti. Florence: S. Olschki, 1994.
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *Brutus*. Edited and translated by G. L. Hendrickson. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1939.
- Commynes, Philip de. *Mémoires*. Geneva: Droz, 2007.
- Corsi, Giovanni. Dedicatory letter to *De prudentia*, by Giovanni Pontano, unpaginated. Florence: Giunta, 1508.

- Corsi, Giovanni. *Vita M. Ficini per Joannem Cursium*. In *Marsile Ficini* by Raymond Marcel, 679-689. Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1958.
- Crinito, Pietro. *De poetis Latinis*. Florence: Giunta, 1505.
- Crinito, Pietro. *De honest disciplina*. Edited by C. Angeleri. Rome: Fratelli Bocca, 1955.
- Crinito, Pietro. "Ad Faustum de Sylva Oricellaria." In *Die Poemata des Petrus Crinitus und ihre Horazimitation*, edited by Anna Mastrogianni, I, IX. Munich: Lit, 2002.
- Erasmus, Desiderius. *Apophthegmata* in *Opera Omnia*, volume IV. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1961-2.
- Ficino, Marsilio. *Supplementum Ficianum: Marcilii Ficini florentini philosophi platonici opuscula inedita et dispersa*. 2 vols. Edited by Paul Oskar Kristeller. Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1937.
- Fonte, Bartolommeo della. *Annales suorum temporum* in *Liber de civitatis Florentiae Famosis Civibus*, by Filippo Villani, ed. Gustavo Camillo Galletti, 273-6. Florence: G. P. Vieusseux, 1881.
- Fonzio, Bartolomeo. *Bartholomaei Fontii: Epistolarum Libri*. Edited by Alessandro Daneloni. Messina: Centro interdipartimentale di studi umanistici, 2008.
- Fonzio, Bartolomeo. *Letters to Friends*. Edited by Alessandro Daneloni and translated by Martin Davies. Cambridge, MA.: I Tatti, 2011.
- Gelli, Giovan-Battista. "Ragionamento infra M. Cosimo Bartoil e Giovan Batista Gelli sopra le difficoltà del mettere in regole la nostra lingua." In *Opere*, edited by Delmo Maestri, 451-481. Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1976.
- Gherardi, A. (ed.), *Statuti della Università e Studio fiorentino dell'anno MCCCCLCCCVII*. Florence: G. P. Vieusseux, 1881.
- Giovio, Paolo. *Opera*. Edited by the Como Historical Society. Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 1957.
- Giovio, Paolo. *Elogia Virorum Literis Illustrium*. Edited by Renzo Meregazzi. Rome: Poligrafico dello Stato, 1972.
- Guicciardini, Francesco. *Storie fiorentine dal 1378 al 1509*. Edited by Roberto Palmarocchi. Bari: G. Laterza & figli, 1931.
- Guicciardini, Francesco. *History of Florence*. Translated Mario Domandi. New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row, 1970.
- Guicciardini, Francesco. *Storia d'Italia*. Edited by Silvana Seidel Menchi. Turin: Einaudi, 1971.
- Guicciardini, Francesco. *A History of Italy*. Translated by Sidney Alexander. New York: Macmillan, 1969.

- Guidi, Guidobaldo. *Ciò che accadde al tempo della signoria di novembre dicembre in Firenze l'anno 1494*. Florence: Arnaud, 1988.
- John of Salisbury. *Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*. Edited and translated by Cary J. Nederman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Landucci, Luca. *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516 continuato da un anonimo al 1542*. Edited by Iodoco del Badia. Florence: Sansoni, 1985.
- Lucian, *How to Write History in The Works of Lucian*. Translated by K. Kilburn, vol. VI. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1959.
- Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Opere*. 3 volumes. Edited by Corrado Vivanti. Turin: Einaudi-Gallimard, 1997.
- Melville-Jones, J. R. (trans.). *The Siege of Constantinople 1453: Seven Contemporary Accounts*. Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972.
- Nietzsche, Frederick. *Beyond Good and Evil*, translated by Helen Zimmern. In *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Edited by Oscar Levy, vol. 12. Edinburgh and London: T. N. Foulis, 1923.
- Parenti, Marco. *Storia fiorentina*. Edited by Andrea Matucci. Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1994.
- Platina, Bartolomeo. *Historici Liber de vita Christi ac omnium pontificum*. Edited by Giacinto Gaida. Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1997.
- Poliziano, *Della congiura dei Pazzi*. Edited by Alessandro Perosa. Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1958.
- Savonarola, Girolamo. *Trattato circa il reggimento e governo della città di Firenze*. In *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, edited by Luigi Firpo, 209-228. Rome: A. Berladetti, 1965.
- Rucellai, Bernardo. *De urbe Roma, seu Latinus commentarius eiusdem in Pub. Victore ac Sext. Rufum de regionibus urbis*. In *Supplementum to Rerum Italicarum scriptores ab anno aerae Christianae millesimo ad millesimum sexcentessimum*. Edited by D. Becucci, II, cc. 783-1190. Florence, 1770.
- Rucellai, Bernardo. "Il trionfo della callunia." In *Canti carnascialeschi del Rinascimento*, edited by Charles S. Singleton, 214-5. Bari: J. Laterza, 1936.
- Rucellai, Bernardo. *De bello italico: La guerra d'Italia*. Edited and translated by Donatella Coppini. Florence: Firenze University Press, 2011.

Rucellai, Giovanni. *Zibaldone quaresimale*. In *Giovanni Rucellai e il suo zibaldone*. Edited by Alessandro Perosa and F. W. Kent, 2 vols, vol. 1. London: Warburg Institute, 1960-1981.

Valeriano, Pierio. *On the Ill Fortune of Learned Men: A Renaissance Humanist and His World*. Translated by Julia Haig Gaisser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

Vettori, Francesco. "Sommario della Istoria d'Italia." In *Scritti Storica e Politici*, edited by Enrico Niccolini, 133-246. Bari: Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 1972.

Secondary Material

Abulafia, David. Introduction to *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy 1494-5: Antecedents and Effects*, edited by David Abulafia, 1-29. Aldershot and Vermont: Variorum, 1995.

Abulafia, "The inception of the reign of King Ferrante I of Naples: the events of summer 1458 in the light of documentation from Milan." In *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy 1494 -5*, edited by David Abulafia, 71-89. Aldershot and Vermont: Variorum, 1995.

Abulafia, David. *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms, The Struggle for Dominion 1200-1500*. London and New York: Longman, 1997.

Abulafia, David. "Ferdinand the Catholic and the Kingdom of Naples." In *Italy and the European Powers: The Impact of War, 1500-1530*, edited by Christine Shaw, 129-158. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006.

Ady, Cecilia M. *A History of Milan under the Sforza*. New York: Putnam's Sons, 1907.

Alonso, J. Fernandez. "La legaciòn frustrada de Cosimo dei Pazzi." *Anthologica Annua* 11 (1963): 55-90.

Angeleri, Carlo. Introduction to *De honesta disciplina*, 1-58 Rome: Fratelli Bocca, 1955.

Amico, J. F. d'. *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome: Humanists and Churchmen on the Eve of the Reformation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.

Appuhn, Karl. *A Forest on the Sea: Environmental Expertise in Renaissance Venice*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.

Bacon, Francis. *On the Advancement of Learning*. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955.

- Bak, János. "The Kingship of Matthias Corvinus: A Renaissance State?" In *Matthias Corvinus and the Humanism in Central Europe*, edited by Tibor Klaniczay and József Jankovics, 34-47. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 1994.
- Baker, Nicholas Scott. *The Fruit of Liberty: Political Culture in the Florentine Renaissance, 1480-1550*. Cambridge, MA. and London: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Bausi, Francesco. "La Lirica Latina di Bartolomeo della Fonte." *Interpres* X (1990): 37-132.
- Bausi, Francesco. *Machiavelli*. Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2005.
- Bentley, Jerry H. *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples*. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1987).
- Berlin, Isaiah. "The Originality of Machiavelli." In *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, edited by Henry Hardy, 33-100. New York: Viking Press, 1980.
- Berti, Ernest. "Alla scuola di Manuele Crisolora: Lettura e commento di Luciano." *Rinascimento* 27: 3-73.
- Biagio Conte, Gian. *Latin Literature: A History*. 2nd ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
- Black, Robert. *Benedetto Accolti and the Florentine Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Black, Robert. "The philosopher and Renaissance culture." In *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, edited by James Hankins, 13-29. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007.
- Black, Robert. *Machiavelli*. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Bisaha, Nancy. *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
- Boutruche, Robert. "The Devastation of Rural Areas during the Hundred Years' War and the Agricultural Recovery of France." In *The Recovery of France in the Fifteenth Century*, edited by P. S. Lewis, translated by G. F. Martin, 23-59. New York: Harper Row, 1972.
- Breisach, Ernst. *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Brown, Alison. "City and Citizen: Changing Perceptions in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries." In *City States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy*, edited by Anthony Molho, Kurt Raaflaub and Julia Emlen, 93-111. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1991.

- Brown, Alison. "Public and Private Interest: Lorenzo, the Monte, and the Seventeen Reformers." In *Lorenzo de' Medici, Studi*, edited by G. C. Garfagnini, 103-165. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1992.
- Brown, Alison. "Partiti, correnti, o coalizioni: un contributo al dibattito." In *Savonarole: Enjeux, débats, questions*, edited by Jean-Louis Fournel and M. Plaisance, 59-70. Paris: Université de la Sorbonne nouvelle, 1997.
- Brown, Alison. "Ideology and Faction in Savonarolan Florence." In *World of Savonarola*, edited by Stella Fletcher Fletcher and Christine Shaw, 22-41. Aldershot and Burlington, VT.: Ashgate, 2000.
- Brown, Alison. "The Revolution of 1494 in Florence and its Aftermath: A Reassessment." In *Italy in Crisis, 1494*, edited by Jane Everson and Diego Zancani, 13-40. Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2000.
- Brucker, Gene. *The Civic World of Early Renaissance Florence*. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Brucker, Gene. "'A Horseshoe Nail': Structure and Contingency in Medieval and Renaissance Italy." In *Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence.*, 62-82. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2005.
- Brucker, Gene. "From *Campanilismo* to Nationhood." In *Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence*, 42-61. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2005.
- Brucker, Gene. "Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence." In *Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence*, 114-127. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2005.
- Bueno de Mesquita, D. M. "Ludovico Sforza and his Vassals," *Italian Renaissance Studies: A Tribute to the Late Cecilia M. Ady*, ed. R. F. Jacobs, 184-216. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960.
- Bueno de Mesquita, D. M. "The Sforza Prince and his State." In *Florence and Italy: Renaissance Studies in Honour of Nicolai Rubinstein*, edited by Peter Denley and Caroline Elam, 184-216. London: Westfield College, 1988.
- Bullard, Melissa Meriam. *Lorenzo il Magnifico: Image and Anxiety, Politics and Finance*. Florence: Olschki, 1994.
- Burke, Jill. "Visualizing Neighborhood in Renaissance Florence: Santo Spirito and Santa Maria del Carmine." *Journal of Urban History* 32:5 (2006): 699-700.
- Burke, Peter. *The Renaissance Sense of the Past*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970.
- Butters, Humfrey C. "Piero Soderini and the Golden Age." *Italian Studies* 33:1 (1978): 55-71.

- Butters, Humfrey C. *Governors and Government in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence 1502-1519*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- Butters, Humfrey C. "Machiavelli and the Medici." In *Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*, edited John M. Najemy, 64-79. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Butters, Humfrey C. "Politics and Diplomacy in Late Quattrocento Italy: the Case of the Barons' War (1485-86)." In *Florence and Italy: Renaissance Studies in Honour of Nicolai Rubinstein*, edited by Peter Denley and Caroline Elam, 13-32. London: Westfield College, 1988.
- Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*. Translated by S. G. C. Middlemore. London: Allen and Unwin, 1921.
- Cabrini, Anna Maria. "Intorno al primo *Decennale*." *Rinascimento* 33 (1993): 69-89.
- Cadoni, Giorgio. *Lotte Politiche e Riforme Istituzionali a Firenze tra il 1494 e eli 1502*. Rome: Archivio Storico Italiano, 1999.
- Canfora, Luciano. *Teorie e tecnica della storiografia classica: Luciano, Plutarco, Dionigi, Anonimo su Tucidide*. Rome: Editori Laterza, 1974.
- Celenza, Christopher S. *Renaissance Humanism and the Papal Curia: Lapo da Castiglionchio the Younger's De curiae commodis*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.
- Celenza, Christopher S. *Piety and Pythagoras in Renaissance Florence: The Symbolum nesianum*. Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2001.
- Celenza, Christopher S. "Francesco Cattani da Diacceto's 'De pulchro,' II.4, and the Practice of Renaissance Platonism." *Academia* 9 (2007): 87-98.
- Celenza, Christopher S. "The Revival of Platonic Philosophy." In *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*. Edited by James Hankins, 72-96. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Celenza, Christopher S. *Machiavelli: A Portrait*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- Celenza, Christopher S. "'Petrus Crinitus and Ancient Latin Poetry.'" In *Essays in Renaissance Thought and Letters: In Honor of John Monfasani*, edited A. K. Frazier and P. Nold, 36-52. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
- Chambers, David S. "The Earlier 'Academies' in Italy." In *Italian Academies of the Sixteenth Century*. Edited by D. S. Chambers and F. Quiviger, 1-14. London: Warburg Institute, 1995.

- Clough, Cecil H. "The Romagna Campaign of 1494: a significant military endeavour." In *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy*, edited by David Abulafia, 191-215. Aldershot: Variorum, 1995.
- Cloulas, Ivan. *Charles VIII et le mirage italien*. Paris: Albin Michel, 1986.
- Cochrane, Eric. *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981.
- Cohn, Norman. *The pursuit of the millenium: revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the Middle Ages*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Coleman, Edward. "Lombard City Annals and the Social and Cultural History of Northern Europe." In *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, edited by Sharon Dale, Alison Williams Lewin, and Duane J. Osheim, 1-20. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State Press, 2007.
- Colish, Marcia L. "Republicanism, Religion, and Machiavelli's Savonarolan Moment." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60:4 (1999): 597-616.
- Comanducci, Rita Maria. *Il Carteggio di Bernardo Rucellai Inventario*. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1996.
- Cooper, Roslyn Pesman. 'L'elezione di Pier Soderini a gonfaloniere a vita.' *Archivio Storico Italiano* 125 (1967): 145-185.
- Cooper, Roslyn Pesman. "The Florentine Ruling Group under the "governo popolare," 1494-1512." *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 7 (1985): 69-182.
- Cooper, Roslyn Pesman. *Pier Soderini and the Ruling Class in Renaissance Florence*. Goldbach: Keip Verlag, 2002.
- Cozenza, Mario E. *Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary of the Italian Humanists and of the World of Classical Scholarship in Italy, 1300-1800*, 6 vols. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1962.
- Croce, Benedetto. *Storie e Leggende Napoletane*. Milan: Adelphi Edizioni, 1990.
- Crouzet-Pavan, Elisabeth. *Venice Triumphant: The Horizons of a Myth*. Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.
- Cummings, Anthony M. *The Maecenas and the Madrigalist: Patrons, Patronage and the Origins of the Italian Madrigal*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2004.
- Dale, Sharon, Alison Williams Lewin and Duane J. Osheim. Introduction to *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ix-xviii. University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007.

- Daston, Lorraine and Katharine Park. *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750*. New York, NY.: Zone Books, 1998.
- Davies, Jonathan. "Marsilio Ficino: Lecturer at the Studio fiorentino." *Renaissance Quarterly* 45 (1992): 785–90.
- Davis, Charles Till. *Dante and the Idea of Rome*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957.
- Dean, Trevor. *Crime and Justice in Late Medieval Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007.
- Denis, Anne. *Charles VIII et les italiens: histoire et mythe*. Geneva: Droz, 1979.
- Devereux, Andrew W. "The Other Side of Empire: the Mediterranean and the Origins of a Spanish Imperial Ideology, 1479-1516." Ph.D dissertation, Johns Hopkins, 2011.
- Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*. 80 vols. Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1960-.
- Earl, D. C. *The Political Thought of Sallust*. Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1961.
- Elliott, J. H. *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716*. London: Penguin, 2002.
- D'Entrèves, Alessandro Passerin. *Dante as a Political Thinker*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952.
- Fédou, René. "Une Révolte populaire à Lyon au Xve siècle. La Rebeyne de 1436." *Cahiers d'histoire publiés par les Universités de Clermont-Lyon-Grenoble*, III (1958): 129-149.
- Ferrante, Joan M. *The Political Vision of the Divine Comedy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Freccero, John. *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Figorilli, Maria Cristina. "I ritmi del segretario e i tempi dello scrittore." In *Festina Lente: Il tempo della scrittura nella letteratura del Cinquecento*, edited by Chiara Cassiani and Maria Cristina Figorilli, 135-164. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2014.
- Finlay, Robert. "The Immortal Republic: The Myth of Venice during the Italian Wars (1494-1530)." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30:4 (1999): 931-944.
- "Five Millenium Catalog of Solar Eclipses, 1401-1500." *National Aeronautics and Space Administration*. <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEcat5/SE1401-1500.html>
- Fontana, Benedetto. "Love of Country and Love of God: The Political Uses of Religion in Machiavelli." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60:4 (1999): 639-658.
- Foot, Sarah. "Finding the meaning of form: narrative in annals and chronicles." In *Writing Medieval History*, edited by Nancy Partner, 88-97. London: Hodder, 2005.

- Fournel, Jean-Louis and Jean-Claude Zacarini *La politique de l'expérience: Savonarole, Guicciardini et le républicanisme florentin*. Turin: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2002.
- Fournel, Jean-Louis and Jean-Claude Zacarini. *Les guerres d'Italie: Des batailles pour l'Europe (1494-1559)*. Paris: Gallimard, 2003.
- Frazier, Alison Knowles. *Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Frigo, Daniel. *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy, the Structure of Diplomatic Practice (1450-1800)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Fubini, Riccardo. "Lega italica e 'politica dell'equilibrio' all'avvento di Lorenzo de' Medici al potere." In *Italia Quattrocentesca: Politica e diplomazia nell'età di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 185-219. Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1994.
- Fubini, Riccardo. "The Theater of the World in the Moral and Historical Thought of Poggio Bracciolini." In *Humanism and Secularization*, translated by Martha King, 80-139. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Fubini, Riccardo. "Renaissance Humanism and its development in Florentine Civic Culture." In *Palgrave Advances in Renaissance Historiography*, edited by Jonathan Woolfson, 118-139. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Fubini, Riccardo. Introduction to *Politica e pensiero politico nell'Italia del Rinascimento: Dallo stato territoriale al Machiavelli*, 7-12. Florence: Edifir, 2009.
- Fubini, Riccardo. "L'idea di Italia fra Quattro e Cinquecento. Politica, geografia storica, miti delle origini." *Politica e pensiero politico nell'Italia del Rinascimento: Dallo stato territoriale al Machiavelli*, 123-42. Florence: Edifir, 2009.
- Gilbert, Felix. "Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari: A Study on the Origin of Modern Political Thought." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 (1949): 101-131.
- Gilbert, Felix. "Florentine Political Assumptions in the Period of Savonarola and Soderini." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20 (1957): 187-214.
- Gilbert, Felix. *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence*. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1965.
- Ginori Lisci, Leonardo. *The Palazzi of Florence: Their History and Art*. Translated by Jennifer Grillo, 2 vols. Rome: Giunti Barbèra, 1985.
- Godorecci, Barbara J. "Beyond Limits: Time, Space, Language in Machiavelli's *Decennali*." In *The Comedy and Tragedy of Machiavelli: Essays on the Literary Works*, edited by Vickie B. Sullivan, 159-175. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

- Grafton, Anthony and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe*. London: Duckworth, 1986.
- Grayson, Cecil .“Lorenzo, Machiavelli and the Italian Language.” In *Italian Renaissance Studies: A Tribute to the late Cecilia M. Ady*, edited by E. F. Jacob, 410-432. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960.
- Grazia, Sebastian de. *Machiavelli in Hell*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Green, Louis. *Chronicle into History: An Essay on the Interpretation of History in Florentine Fourteenth-Century Chronicles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.
- Grube, G. M. A. *The Greek and Roman Critics*. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995.
- Guidi, G. "La corrente savonaroliana e la petizione al Papa del 1497." *Archivio Storico Italiano* 142 (1984): 31-46.
- Hale, J. R. “War and Opinion: War and Public Opinion in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” *Past and Present* 22 (1962): 18-35.
- Hale, J. R. “War and Public Opinion in Renaissance Italy.” In *Italian Renaissance Studies: A Tribute to the late Cecilia M. Ady*, edited by E. F. Jacob, 94-122. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960.
- Hall, Bert S. *Weapons and Warfare in Renaissance Europe: Gunpowder, Technology, and Tactics*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997.
- Hampton, Timothy. *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Hankins, James. “Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 111-207.
- Hankins, James. *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols. Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2003.
- Hay, Denys. “Flavio Biondo and the Middle Ages,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1959): 97-125.
- Hay, Denys. “Italy and Barbarian Europe.” In *Italian Renaissance Studies: A Tribute to the late Cecilia M. Ady*, edited by E.F. Jacob, 48-68. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1960.
- Hay, Denys. *Annalists and Historians: Western Historiography from the eighth to the eighteenth century*. London: Methuen, 1977.

- Hochner, Nicole. "A Sixteenth-Century Manifesto for Social Mobility or the Body Politic Metaphor in Mutation," *History of Political Thought* 33:4 (2012): 607-626.
- Honess, Claire. "The Language(s) of Civic Invective in Dante: Rhetoric, Satire, and Politics." *Italian Studies* 68:2 (2013): 157-174.
- Honig, Bonnie. *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Hughes, R. J. F. "Francesco Vettori: His Place in Florentine Diplomacy and Politics." Ph.D dissertation, London University, 1958.
- Ianziti, Gary. "Humanism's New Science: The History of the Future." *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance* 4 (1991): 59-88.
- Ianziti, Gary. *History in Renaissance Italy: Leonardo Bruni and the Uses of the Past*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Illardi, Vincent. "Towards the Tragedia d'Italia: Ferrante and Galeazzo Maria Sforza, friendly enemies and hostile allies." In *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy*, edited by David Abulafia, 91-122. Aldershot: Variorum, 1995.
- Jervis, Jane L. *Cometary Theory in Fifteenth-century Europe*. Dordrecht: D. Riedel, 1985.
- Jones, Rosemary Devonshire. "Some Observations on the Relations Between Francesco Vettori and Niccolò Macchiavelli during the Embassy to Maximilian I.B" *Italian Studies* 23:1 (1968): 93-113.
- Jones, Rosemary Devonshire. *Francesco Vettori: Florentine Citizen and Medici Servant*. London: Althone Press, 1972.
- Kallendorf, Craig. "Virgil, Dante and Empire in Italian Thought, 1300-1500." *Vergilius* 34 (1988): 44-69.
- Kamen, H. *Spain, 1469-1714: A Society of Conflict*. New York: Longman, 1983.
- Kantorowicz, Ernst H. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- Kelley, Donald R. *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law and History in the French Renaissance*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970.
- Kelley, Donald R. *Renaissance Humanism*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991.
- Kent, Dale V. "The Florentine *Reggimento* in the Fifteenth-Century," *Renaissance Quarterly* 28:4 (1975): 575-638.
- Kent, Dale V. *The Rise of the Medici: faction in Florence, 1426-1434*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

- Kent, Dale V. *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Kent, Dale V. *Friendship, Love and Trust in Renaissance Florence*. Cambridge, MA. and London: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Kent, Francis William. "Palaces, Politics and Society in Fifteenth-Century Florence." *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance* 2 (1987): 41-70
- Kent, Francis William. *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence: The Family Life of the Capponi, Ginori and Rucellai*. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Kidwell, Carol. "Venice, the French invasion and the Apulian ports." In *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy*, edited by David Abulafia, 295-308. Aldershot: Variorum, 1995.
- Kristeller, P. O. *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*. Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1956.
- Kristeller, P. O. "Humanist Learning in the Italian Renaissance." In *Renaissance Thought and the Arts*, 1-19. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Kronk, Gary W. *Cometography: A Catalog of Comets*. 5 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Labande-Mailfert, Yvonne. *Charles VIII et son milieu: 1470-1498: La jeunesse au pouvoir*. Paris: Klincksieck, 1975.
- Lane, Frederick C. *Venice: A Maritime Republic*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.
- Little, Richard. *The Balance of Power in International Relations: Metaphors, Myths and Models*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Maleissye, Jean de. *Histoire du poison*. Paris: F. Bourin, 1991.
- Mallett, Michael. "Personalities and Pressures: Italian involvement in the French invasion of 1494." In *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy*, edited by David Abulafia, 151-163. Aldershot: Variorum, 1995.
- Mallett, Michael. "The transformation of war, 1494-1530." In *Italy and the European Powers: The Impact of War, 1500-1530*, edited by Christine Shaw, 3-21. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006.
- Mallett Michael and Christine Shaw. *The Italian Wars, 1494-1559*. Harlow: Pearson, 2012.
- Marchesi, Concetto. *Bartolomeo della Fonte*. Catania: Cav. Niccolò Giannotta, 1900.

- Marchiaro, Michaelangiola. *La Biblioteca di Pietro Crinito: Manoscritti e libri a stampa della raccolta*. Porto: Fédération internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 2013.
- Marks, L. F. "La crisi finanziaria a Firenze dal 1494 al 1502." *Archivio Storico Italiano* 112 (1954): 40-72.
- Marks, L. F. "The development of the institutions of public finance at Florence during the last sixty years of the Republic, cc. 1470-1530." PhD diss. Oxford, 1954.
- Markov, Nathan. "Machiavelli's Critique of Religion." *Social Research* 81:1 (2014): 193-216.
- Marsh, David. *Lucian and the Latins: Humor and Humanism in the Early Renaissance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998.
- Martelli, Mario. "Dante e Machiavelli" *Schede Umanistiche* 1:1 (1999): 1-19.
- Martines, Lauro. "La famiglia Martelli." *Archivio Storico Italiano* (1959): 29-43.
- Martines, Lauro. *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979.
- Martines, Lauro. *April Blood: Florence and the Plot against the Medici*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Martines, Lauro. *Fire in the City: Savonarola and the Struggle for the Soul of Renaissance Florence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Masters, Roger D. *Fortune is a River: Leonardo da Vinci and Niccolò Machiavelli's Magnificent Dream to Change the Course of Florentine History*. New York: The Free Press, 1998.
- Mattingly, Garrett. *Renaissance Diplomacy*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1955.
- Mazzotta, Giuseppe. *Dante, Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the Divine Comedy*. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- McCuaig, William. "Bernardo Rucellai and Sallust." *Rinascimento* 22 (1982): 75-99.
- McGushin, P. (ed.), *C. Sallustius Crispus, Bellum Catilinae: a commentary*. Leiden: Brill, 1977.
- Meinecke, Friedrich. *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'État and Its Place in Modern History*. Translated by Douglas Scott. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.
- Meserve, Margaret. *Empire of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2008.

- Molho, A. *Florentine Public Finances in the Early Renaissance, 1400-1433*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1971.
- Mommsen, Theodore E. "Petrarch's Conception of the 'Dark Ages,'" *Speculum* 17:2 (1942): 226-242.
- Nadel, George H. "Philosophy of History before Historicism." *History and Theory* 3:3 (1964): 291-315.
- Najemy, John M. *Between Friends: Discourses of Power and Desire in the Machiavelli-Vettori letters of 1513-1515*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Najemy, John M. *A history of Florence, 1200-1575*. West Sussex: Blackwell, 2008.
- Nolhac, Pierre de. *Erasme en Italie*. Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1888.
- Nutton, Vivian. "Medicine in Medieval Western Europe, 1000-1500." In *The Western Medical Tradition, 800 BC to AD 1800*. Vol. 1., edited by Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter and Andrew Wear, 139-207. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Nutton, Vivian. *Ancient Medicine*. 2nd edition. London and New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Osmond, Patricia J. "Princeps Historiae Romanae: Sallust in Renaissance Political Thought." *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 40 (1995): 101-135.
- Ourliac, Paul. "The Concordat of 1472: An Essay on the Relations between Louis XI and Sixtus IV." In *The Recovery of France in the Fifteenth Century*, edited by P. S. Lewis and translated by G. F. Martin, 102-184. New York: Harper Row, 1972.
- Pade, Marianne (ed.). *On Renaissance Academies*. Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2011.
- Passerini, Luigi. *Genealogia e storia della famiglia Ricasoli*. Firenze: M. Cellini & C. Alla Galliliana, 1861.
- Parker, Geoffrey. *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Passy, Louis. *Un ami de Machiavel, François Vettori, sa vie et ses oeuvres*. Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1913-1914.
- Pellegrini, Guglielmo. *L'umanistà Bernardo Rucellai e le sue opere storiche*. Livorno: Raffaello Giusti, 1920.
- Pellegrini, Marco. *Le Guerre d'Italia (1494-1530)*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009.
- Pellegrino, Nicoletta. "From the Roman Empire to Christian Imperialism: The Work of Flavio Biondo." In *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, edited by Sharon Dale, Alison Williams Lewin and Duane J. Osheim, 273-298. University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State Press, 2007.

- Pepper, Simon. "The Face of the Siege: Fortification, Tactics and Strategy in the early Italian Wars." In *Italy and the European powers; the impact of war, 1500-1530*, edited by Christine Shaw, 33-56. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006.
- Peyronnet, Georges. "The distant origins of the Italian wars: political relations between France and Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries." In *French Descent into Renaissance Italy*, ed. David Abulafia, 29-47. Aldershot: Variorum, 1995.
- Philips, Mark. *Francesco Guicciardini: The Historian's Craft*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977.
- Pieri, Piero. *Il Rinascimento e la crisi militare italiana*. Turin: Einaudi, 1952.
- Plett, Heinrich F. *Enargeia in Classical Antiquity and the Early Modern Age*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- Pocock, J. G. A. *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thoughts and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975.
- Pocquet du Haut-Jussé, Barthélemy-Amédée. "Une Idée politique de Louis XI: la sujétion éclipse la vassalité," *Revue historique*, 226:2 (1961): 383-98.
- Polizzotto, Lorenzo. *The Elect Nation: The Savonarolan Movement in Florence, 1494-1545*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1994.
- Preyer, Brenda. "Florentine Palaces and Memories of the Past." In *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*, edited by Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin, 176-194. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.
- Quaglio, A. "Dante e Machiavelli." *Cultura e Scuola* 9 (1970): 160-173.
- Quain, Edward A. "The Medieval Accessus ad Auctores." *Traditio* III (1945): 215-264.
- Queller, Donald E. *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages*. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1967.
- Reynolds, Barbara. *Dante: The Poet, the Political Thinker, the Man*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006.
- Ridolfi, Roberto. *Vita di G. Savonarola*. Roma: A. Belardetti, 1952.
- Roover, Raymond de. *The Rise and Fall of the Medici Bank, 1397-1494*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- Reynolds, L. D. (ed.). *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.
- Rubinstein, Nicolai. "I primi anni del Consiglio Maggiore di Firenze (1494-1499)." *Archivio Storico Italiano* 212 (1954): 158-194

- Rubinstein, Nicolai. "The Place of Empire in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Political Opinion and Diplomacy." *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 30 (1957): 125-135.
- Rubinstein, Nicolai. "Firenze e il problema della politica imperiale in Italia al tempo di Massimiliano I." *Archivio Storico Italiano* 116 (1958), 5-35.
- Rubinstein, Nicolai. "Politics and Constitution in Florence at the End of the Fifteenth Century." In *Italian Renaissance Studies: A Tribute to the late Cecilia M. Ady*, edited by E. F. Jacob, 148-183. London: Faber and Faber, 1960.
- Rubinstein, Nicolai. "Formation of the Posthumous Image of Lorenzo de' Medici." In *Oxford, China and Italy: Writings in Honour of Sir Harold Acton on his Eightieth Birthday*, edited by Edward Chaney and Neil Ritchie, 94-106. London: Thames and Hudson, 1984.
- Rubinstein, Nicolai. *The government of Florence under the Medici (1434-1494)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Rubinstein, Nicolai. "Problems of Evidence in the History of Political Ideas." In *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, edited by Giovanni Capelli, I, 335-346. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2004.
- Rubinstein, Nicolai. "Italian Reactions to Terraferma Expansion in the Fifteenth Century." In *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, edited by Giovanni Ciapelli, II, 261-285. Rome: Edizioni di storia e della letteratura, 2004.
- Rubinstein, Nicolai. "Machiavelli storico." In *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, edited by Giovanni Ciapelli, III, 171-204. Rome: Edizioni di storia e della letteratura, 2004.
- Rubinstein, Nicolai. "Savonarola on the Government of Florence." In *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, edited by Giovanni Ciapelli, II, 425-438. Rome: Edizioni di storia e della letteratura, 2004.
- Ryder, Alan. *Alfonso the Magnanimous, King of Aragon, Naples and Sicily, 1396-1458*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Sasso, Gennaro. *Niccolò Machiavelli: Storia del suo pensiero politico*. Bologna: il Mulino, 1980.
- Sasso, Gennaro. "Brevi considerazioni sugli Orti Oricellari." In *Machiavelli e gli antichi e altri saggi*, I, 353-357. Milan and Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1987.
- Sasso, Gennaro. "Per alcuni versi del primo Decennale." In *Machiavelli e gli antichi e altri saggi*, II, 165-196. Milan and Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1987.
- Sasso, Gennaro. Preface to *Consulte e pratiche della Repubblica Fiorentina*. 2 vols. Edited by Denis Fachard, ix-xv. Geneva: Droz, 1993.

- Scott, John A. *Dante's Political Purgatory*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.
- Schechner Genuth, Sarah. *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology*. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Shaw, Christine. *Julian II: The Warrior-Pope*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.
- Shaw, Christine. "The Roman barons and the French descent into Italy." In *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy*, edited by David Abulafia, 249-261. Aldershot: Variorum, 1995.
- Shaw, Christine. "The Papacy and the European Powers." In *Italy and the European Powers: The Impact of War, 1500-1530*, edited by Christine Shaw, 107-126. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006.
- Shaw, Christine. *The Political role of the Orsini family from Sixtus IV to Clement VII*. Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 2007.
- Sidwell, Keith. "Lucian in the Italian Quattrocento." Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 1975.
- Skinner, Quentin. *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Smalley, Beryl. "Sallust in the Middle Ages." *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 500-1500*. Edited by R. R. Bolgar, Vol. 1, 165-175. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- Smalley, Beryl. *Historians in the Middle Ages*. New York: Scribner, 1974.
- Spiegel, Gabrielle M. "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text." In *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography*, 3-28. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1999.
- Steel, Duncan. *Eclipse: The Celestial Phenomenon that Changed the Course of History*. Joseph Henry Press: Washington, D.C., 2001.
- Syme, Ronald. *Sallust*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964.
- Torre, Arnaldo della. *Storia dell'Accademia Platonica di Firenze*. Florence: Tip. G. Carnesecchi e figli, 1902.
- Travi, Ernesto. "Giovio, gli Orti Oricellari e Machiavelli." *Testo* 5 (1983): 52-61.
- Trexler, Richard C. *Church and Community, 1200-1600: Studies in the History of Florence and New Spain*. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1987.
- Trinkaus, Charles. "A Humanist's Image of Humanism." *Studies in the Renaissance* 7 (1960): 90-147.

- Trinkaus, Charles. *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought*. 2 vols. South Bend: University of Notre-Dame Press, 1990.
- Vagt, Alfred. "The Balance of Power: The Growth of an Idea." *World Politics* 1 (1948): 82-101.
- Villari, Pasquale. *Life and Times of Girolamo Savonarola*. Translated by Linda Villari. 2 volumes. New York: Haskell Publishing, 1969.
- Weinstein, Donald. *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Whaley, Joachim. *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Wilcox, Donald J. *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the Fifteenth Century*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1969.
- Wolffe, Bertram. *Henry VI*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Yates, Francis. "The Italian Academies." In *Renaissance and Reform: The Italian Contribution*. II, 6-29. London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.

Curriculum Vitae

I was born 12 September 1984 in Montreal (Quebec), Canada. I completed an International Baccalaureate degree in Psychology and Theatre at Champlain Regional College (St. Lambert) before entering into undergraduate studies at Concordia University (Montreal). While there I completed an honours in Western Society and College at the Liberal Arts College as well as a major in history. I received a master's from the University of Toronto in medieval history where I wrote my thesis the depiction of Nero in Giovanni Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium*. I delivered a version of this paper at the Modern Languages Association Annual Conference in Montreal in 2010. I have delivered conference papers on chapters from my dissertation at the Renaissance Society of America in Montreal in 2011 and Berlin in 2015